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CHARLES MINER

A

PENNSYLVANIA PIONEER.

BY

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and
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PREFACE.

In his later years Hon. Charles Miner spent much time burning letters and papers, and some have since been lost, notably a large part of his *Autobiography,* but a good number have survived, in the care since his son William P. died, of his grand-daughter, Mrs. Anna (Miner) Oliver, who has diligently typewritten all the most important ones—no small task when the ravages of time and illegibility are taken into account. It has been the plan of this memoir to let these manuscripts tell their own story as far as possible. As it has been prepared not only for the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society but for Mr. Miner's descendants, it has seemed proper to print some details of especial interest to the latter, such as somewhat free extracts from his love-letters to his wife. Also, at this late date, there has seemed no impropriety in publishing letters marked "confidential". Only modesty caused those to his wife to be so guarded, and those from his friends had immediate bearing on their own political interests, now matters of history. Indeed, without these letters the story of his life could hardly have been told.

The sketch was practically finished, as far as the manuscripts were concerned, with only some points to elucidate and annotate, chiefly with regard to the years in Congress, when the work fell to my hands.

The difficulties of tracing out the history of "a Bill" through the various official publications of the House in early days, with their omissions, lack of complete indices,

etc., are great, so if error should be found, I beg that I, alone, may be held responsible. Also, I have added, here and there, matter purtenant and interesting in my opinion, but spoiling the symmetry of the volume as originally planned.

Some spellings in the originals, as Brownson for Bronson, have been retained in the text, but corrected in the index. In some cases it has been impossible to tell whether Mr. Smith—Judge Smith—or General Smith—were one and the same man, or not, but what diligence could do to supply first names and to decide such questions has been done.

ELIZABETH MINER RICHARDSON.

CHARLES MINER, 1780-1865.

I am about to try to tell some parts of the story of a life of singular range and usefulness.

Charles Miner was one of the most original and influential of the Pennsylvania editors of the first third of the nineteenth century. He was an early promoter of the anthracite coal trade, and of canals, as a part of internal improvement. As a State legislator his influence ranged between fields as widely apart as compulsory vaccination and the regulation of bank currency. He made the first persistent, long-continued effort on the floor of the House looking toward the final extinction of slavery. Like the Sage of Monticello, he diffused moral and political advice, while at the same time concerning himself with the material welfare of State and Nation. Like Franklin, by his essays he made sounder the life of his time. He wrote, from original investigations, the standard history, never to be displaced, of the Wyoming Valley, the massacre of July 3, 1778, and the long-disputed land-claims of Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Finally, and most enduring of all, he coined the phrase most current to-day on the lips of thousands of Americans—"to have an ax to grind".

Charles, the youngest of four children, was born in Norwich (now Norwich Old Town, two miles from the river settlement), Connecticut, on the first day of February, 1780.

The Connecticut Miners were descendants of Thomas Minor, or Mynor, a native of Chew Magna, Somerset, England, born April 23, 1608, the first of the family to emigrate to the new world. According to a quaint "Herauldicall Essay upon the Surname of Miner," a copy of which (now in the Historical Room, Hartford, Connecticut) was procured about 1683 by Thomas Minor from his

cousin William, of Bristol, England; "Edward the third going to make warre against the French took a progresse through Somersett, and coming to Mendippi Colles minerarii, Mendippe Hills in Somersett where lived one Henry Miner, his name being taken rather *a denominatione loci et ab officio,* who with all carefullness and Loyaltie having convened his Domesticall and Meniall servants armed with Battle-axes profered himself and them to his Master's service making up a compleat hundred. Wherefore he had his Coat armoriall." In the course of this genealogy of the family Miner, it is interestingly said of a Fifteenth century William, that he "lived to revenge the death of the two young Princes murdered in the Tower of London, upon their inhumane unckle Richard the 3rd. It was said of this William Miner that he was Flos Militia, the Flower of chivilarie."

The writer of the "Essay", which abounds in the punning intricacies and polyglot excursuses common to the literature of the seventeenth century, says at the end: "I shall be very much beholden to the Learned reader who if he can give more satisfaction in this essay would for the honour of Antiquitie (who now lyes *in profundo Democratis Puteo*) mend the Errata Chronologicall and see if he can derive the surname from a longer time; it being supposed that Henry Miner's name before the King's progresse in Somersett was Bullman, but how certain however I know not; but leave it to some other whose experience and learning exceeds mine."

Thomas Minor came to Charlestown, Mass., in 1629; lived at Hingham from 1636 to 1645; removed to New London, Conn., in that year, with the second Governor John Winthrop's colony of Massachusetts Puritans; and was Magistrate, member of the General Court, and trusted by his fellows in many ways. A final move, in 1652, was to Pawcatuck, now Stonington, in the same State, where he

built a house at Wicketaquoc Cove; took part in the organization of the town; twice acted as a commissioner to treat with neighboring Indians; and served as lieutenant in the militia. The miscellaneous character of his usefulness may be illustrated by an entry in his diary for April 24, 1669—in the usual affluent orthography of manuscripts of the time: "I was by the Towne & this yeare chosen to be a select man the Townes Treasurer the Townes Recorder The brander of horses by the Generale Courte Recorded the head officer of the Traine band by the same Court one of the ffouer that have Charge of the milishcia of the whole Countie and Chossen and sworne Commissionor and one to assist in keeping the Countie Courte." Before his death he had selected from his own fields a granite stone for his grave, in the burial-ground near his home; and the horizontal bowlder, with its inscription legibly recut, tells the visitor that "Here lyeth the body of Lieutenant Thomas Minor, aged 83 years. Departed 1690." Near by, a monument commemorates, at greater length, the services of Thomas Minor and three of his associates in the first days of the town.

Thomas Minor's son Clement was the father of Clement, whose son Hugh was the father of Seth, who was born in New London in 1742, removed to Norwich; was a carpenter by trade; was for some years keeper of the jail; and served as orderly to Jedediah Huntington at Dorchester Heights, when the colonials were besieging the British in Boston. He lived to see his sons Charles and Asher well established in Pennsylvania, and died at Asher's home in Doylestown, in that State, in 1822.

Charles Miner, in the fragments that are left of his *Autobiography,* which he called "Foot-prints of Charles Miner on the Sands of Time," says:

"According to the family records I was born on the first day of February 1780, in the City of Norwich, Connecticut, of course in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Too

young to recollect the events of that great struggle; but its conclusion, the parade, the musick, the thundering of cannon on the declaration of Peace, I well remember." Anything he may have said in the *Autobiography* of his education is lost, but in a letter of date July 17, 1859, in answer to an invitation to be present or to send a letter at the two hundredth anniversary of the settlement of Norwich, he wrote that he was too old to come, and then went on to give a series of pictures hung in his gallery of memories: He says, "Affection for Norwich is twined with every fibre of my heart. Having emigrated to Pennsylvania while yet a boy, my *time* of observation is limited, and my *scene* of observation, to little more than the old Town or round the Square, fitted, rather, to amuse the grand-children, than impart instruction or pleasure to the present generation." * * *

[Perhaps one pretty, characteristic story which has amused the grand-children may be inserted here: Returning to Norwich after forty years he said he knew the old house on the square was no longer standing, but he would just walk out and see if the brown thrashers' nest was still there!] " * * * But to the school. The old Brick School House [Norwich-old-town, still in use] at the bottom of the lane, below the spacious new jail, knew no recess. * * * Newcome Kinne awakened a high degree of emulation, especially in writing, a *sampler* was pasted up before six or seven scholars, near the ceiling, on fine paper, on a double arch sustained by Corinthian columns. * * * Within each half arch, near the upper part, in fine hand, a poetical quotaion, as suggested by fancy, probably from 'Hannah Moore's Search after Happiness,' then highly popular. Beneath, in larger hand, successive lines in beautiful penmanship, filling the whole. The *Piece* painted in water colors—The pride of mothers—master and scholars. * * * The obedience fair. Teachers capable and attentive. Dis-

cipline preserved without undue severity. Pleasant were our school hours."

This, with some time at the "Lathrop School on the Plain" seems to have been the extent of his "schooling"; but life is always a school and he was always a scholar. After leaving this school he worked for some time at the printers trade in the office of the *Connecticut Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer* at New London.

"After going into the office of Messrs. Hubbard and Bushnell for eight or ten months, I too, at the tender age of thirteen was sent willingly as an apprentice in the same office [with his brother Asher who was apprenticed to a Col. Green.] I remained with them a year, when my feeble health gave way, and Col. Green, my excellent and beloved master, took me home. * * * The moment health sufficient returned I repaired again to New London to attend the Bookstore, and learn book-binding, with Thomas Green, a Brother of Samuel. Soul-stirring incidents began to arise. Two French Frigates * * * came into the harbour for loads of timber. The officers purchased books and paper at our store. At night the sailors of both vessels all with red caps, to the number of some hundreds, would come on shore, accompanied by flags and musick. Parties from the town with the American flag would join them, and with the whole march from street to street singing the Marsellaise Hymn * * * making vows for Liberty or Death—denouncing the Tyranny of Great Britain, whose vessels were then giving no little interruption to our commerce. The people were wild with enthusiasm. * * * I may as well tell the anecdote here. Having learned, however imperfectly, the tune of the Marsellaise Hymn, it never was forgotten. Near forty years afterwards Dr. [Thomas] M[iner] told me at Wilkes-Barre he was going to visit a patient, who had been a member of the National Convention; having voted for the Death of Louis, he had become an exile. I

went with him. Scarcely raising his head from the pillow he feebly replied to the enquiry of the Physician; and his pale cheeks told of extreme debility rather than acute disease. Speaking cheerily I told him he should have pleasant companions, and be out in the open air, see the bright sun, hear the birds sing and sing himself. He shook his head. Telling him I thought there were tunes that would arouse and do him good (I confess it was not very good manners) * * * I struck up, as well as I could,

'Ye sons of France, awake to glory
See what myriads bid you rise!'

What a metamorphosis! Rousing instantly, he sat up, his eye flashing fire, he drew on his cap, and taking up the note, made the room ring again. I hardly expected ever to hear that electrifying hymn sung by one of the original actors in the scenes that gave it rise. * * *" *

"Many persons from Norwich emigrating and preparing to emigrate to the Susquehanna, my father thought it best for me to go out and look after his lands, to settle—to sell —to do what should seem most judicious: all this while Brother Asher, regularly bound to a seven or eight year apprenticeship to Master Green, was laboriously, but cheerfully, pursuing his course, making himself truly a man of business, not only acquiring his profession, but what is quite as necessary to success in life and only to be attained by long continued discipline—steadiness—the habit of application, method * * *.

"Preparatory to my Susquehanna journey it was thought proper that I should be taught surveying. To this end I was sent to Lebanon [Conn.], and placed in the family and under the tuition of Ebenezer Bushnell of whom I have

*Jean Francois Dupuy, a native of Bordeaux, France, who emigrated from there to the Island of San Domingo, where he became a wealthy planter; during the uprise of the Blacks on that island he escaped to Philadelphia, stripped of his fortune, and came to Wilkes-Barre about the year 1796 and lived in a house on the corner of Northampton and Franklin streets, where he died in the year 1836.

spoken as printer of a Paper * * * at Norwich * * *. It was the winter of 1798-9 and we were getting things in readiness to depart for Susquehanna * * * and on the 8th of February 1799—I being 19 years old the first day of that month—we put our horse to the sled, bade farewell, and set our faces westward ho!

"I have frequently quoted some beautiful lines of a Spanish Poet on leaving home; sweet from the flowing harmony of the numbers; 'tender and true' for the sentiment.

'Hushed be the winds, be still the waters motion!
Sleep—sleep—my bark in silence on the main,
So when to-morrow's light shall gild the ocean,
Mine eyes once more shall view the coast of Spain:
Vain is each wish, my last petition scorning
Fresh blows the gale, and high the billows swell:
Far shall we be before the break of morning,
O then, forever, Native Spain, farewell."

The lands to which the youth so cheerfully set out were on the Wyalusing in what was then called Usher, in Luzerne county, but is now Jessup township, Susquehanna county, near Montrose. The journey thither—"strange to say without being stopped for traveling on the Sabbath"—was marked by as many hardships as were met by far-western settlers fifty years after; and the task of settlement was a rough struggle with virgin forests, wild animals, and scanty facilities. "On the 12th of February, 1799," he wrote, "in company with Captain Peleg Tracy, his brother Leonard, and Miss Lydia Chapman in one sleigh; Mr. John Chase, of Newburyport, and myself in another; I set out from Norwich, Ct., and arrived at Hopbottom, [Luzerne county, Pa.,] the 28th. The snow left us the first night, when we were only twelve miles on our way and we were obliged to place our sleighs on trundle-wheels." Miss Chapman's cheering helpfulness impressed him—"our cheerful, undaunted female friend; through the patience-

trying journey of sixteen days never a tear, a murmur, or a sigh." He found himself "one of a perfect live stream of emigrants bound for different positions on the Susquehanna waters. At night, spreading the beds and blankets on the floor in front of a huge fire, a circle of twenty or thirty men, women, and children, boys, girls, and dogs, would lie down in the confidence of company and the security of innocence."

Taking up two "lots" at first he cleared four acres and sowed them with wheat, which he harvested in the fall; but while it was in stack it was destroyed by bears. The place was afterward known as Miner Hill. On the other lot he built a bark cabin, and commenced chopping; but, being unaccustomed to the business, made slow progress. He soon cut his foot, and was taken to a Mr. Whipple's, where he was cared for during several weeks. "When he got well, his taste for farming subsided," says a son of Mr. Whipple, "and he began to think he had mistook his calling."

He never regretted, however, his experiences in what he used to call "Nature's Beech-wood Academy," when, as the *Autobiography* records, he started in the thick woods, with one eight-penny bill in his pocket, to become the artificer of his own fortunes. "It is probable that a large portion of the young men from New England who went out to settle in the then west and who are now [1844] emigrating to the far west beyond the Mississippi, should they relate their adventures, would present kindred histories of buoyancy of spirit amid privations—the surmounting of difficulties and at the same time the hardly-thought-of evils of an empty purse." Among his privations he never counted the fact that the camp-provisions were "chiefly Indian meal stewed in maple sap;" for he was a compatriot of Joel Barlow.

As for the "maple sap" part of his meal, he certainly had earned it, for sugar-making was one of the chief works

of the young wood-cutter and farmer. Having "gone shares" with a certain Joe Sprague, who lived in solitude, with twelve or fourteen miles of wilderness separating him from the nearest humanity, young Miner, according to his own narrative, "took a horse load of [sugar] down the Tunkhannock, peddled it out, a pound of sugar for a pound of pork, seven and a half pounds for a bushel of wheat, five pounds for a bushel of corn; saw the Susquehanna; got a grist ground; returned, and with Mr. Chase made knapsacks of coarse shirts; filled them with provisions, and, each taking an ax on his shoulder, took the bridle path by Mr. Parke's, and thence, fifteen miles more or less, arrived at the forks of the Wyalusing. I do not think a line drawn due south from Binghamton to Tunkhannock, near forty miles, would have cut a laid out road, or come in sight of a house or cabin on an earlier date than the preceding summer."

The snow was his book, the wolf and wild pigeon his companions, and the stars his philosophers and friends:

"From Joe Sprague, I remember distinctly, I learned something besides sugar-making; he formed for me a map of the country, on the snow, including the lakes, the St. Lawrence, and the Mississippi, showing me what part was in our territory and what belonged to Great Britain and Spain; and he used to tell me that I swore never to cease my efforts until those rivers and lakes should be made the boundary of the United States. Half is accomplished; let the other be. * * *

"As it was impossible to sit in the hut, after everything was in order I would wrap myself in my blanket and go out and sit on the rocks, rendered bare and warm by the constant fires, and look at the stars, and listen, not unfrequently, to the distant howl of the wolf or the cry of the catamount. Where my thoughts wandered you may easily guess; brought up with great tenderness, the contrast was sufficiently obvious to be felt as well as seen; yet I do not

remember, even for a moment, of indulging either sorrow or despondence. A lively hope, a firm resolution to do something and be somebody, a just ambition, inspired me, and added hope to gild the future with rays of sunshine."

"The snow was now departing, and the wild pigeons came, not in flocks—not in floods, but in a perfect deluge; the whole heavens were dark with them; the cloud on wing continuing to pass for an hour or more, and cloud succeeding cloud. There were not millions but myriads, confirming the account of Audubon of the countless multitudes of these birds that formerly visited Kentucky. Towns were built by them for five or six miles in length along the Meshoppen—every branch and bough of every tree holding a rude nest." * His grandson, Isaac M. Thomas, and Mr.

*THE PASSING OF A RACE.

[From the Cleveland Plain Dealer, 1914.]

The death of a single bird in a public zoo is usually of but passing importance, but there will be historic interest in the death of Martha, the veteran passenger pigeon in the zoo at Cincinnati. Martha is twenty-nine years of age and is claimed to be the last of her race in the United States. With her death that class of wild pigeon will become extinct.

Within the memory of the present generation there were millions of these wild birds flying at will through the country from the Gulf to the Lakes. Through Ohio and Indiana there were vast flocks of them, their numbers being countless. Ravenous, after one of their flights, they played havoc with many crops, and hunters employed nets, firearms and other devices to slaughter or frighten them away.

As their numbers became reduced they were hunted with great zeal and supplied material for most appetizing pot pies. They traveled in great flocks, were able to cover great distances in a flight and because of their migratory habits were given their name. In size and color they were much like the domestic pigeon seen in most villages and cities. On the wing they could distance the domestic pigeon.

Because of their numbers, their slaughter was ruthless, and they rapidly decreased in numbers. Gradually the flocks became fewer and of less numbers, and finally they ceased to travel. When they became scarce a few were secured for the zoo at Cincinnati. Gradually they have died, and the veteran bird, now weakened and near death, is claimed to be the sole survivor known of the millions seen only a few years ago.

In the country where the numbers were the greatest the final extinction of the race will be seen. The rare event of the extinction of a race will take place at the Cincinnati zoo.

W. H. Sturdevant, both can remember when these pigeons still came in clouds, and is it not pathetic that, through man's cruelty it is doubtful if even one of them is living to-day? Similarly some years later, 1804 or 1805, he describes the shad coming up the Susquehanna to Wilkes-Barré: "They came in myriads, and attained, at that distance from the ocean a fatness and flavor unknown in the lower part of the river. Every family put up a barrel or two, they were cleaned and cured for domestic use [and] a luxury once a day the whole year round * * *. Let us take our boats, skiffs and canoes, row and paddle up the River and across above the sand-bar, to the landing on Col. Dorrance's farm a little below and opposite Mill Creek. Dorrance himself will be there, and Pettibone, and Shoemaker if he be not enaged alone. * * * Mr. Shoemaker, the Lawyer, the Blacksmith, the Printer forgot everything except to hold the head line close to the bottom." Having divided their spoil they loaded their boats and "return to Wilkes-Barre and moor them, with their treasure, feeling that without watching they will be safe. * * * Old Mr. Hess * * * used to say, after the canal was made, the dam erected in the River and the shad stopped—It was all folly and wickedness * * * for God made the Rivers, and broke down the mountains so that the shad might go up, and boats * * * go down free; and man impiously thinking himself wiser had undertaken to mend God's work, but had marred it." Returning to his clearing:

"It was interesting to observe that wherever the fire ran out of the fallow, destroying the timber sometimes, though rarely, the denseness and dampness of the forest preventing its extending far, the next season myriads of raspberries would spring up, thick as it was possible to grow, and ripen as if the earth had been one mass of raspberry seed. * * * The remark was universal that wherever a windfall had occurred * * * the new timber that sprung up was never like that which preceded it. * * * Where

Mr. Hyde cleared a field of white pine of very large growth, the soil was found filled with yellow pine-knots, where not a yellow pine was then known. It seemed abundantly evident that it was a law of nature to supply successive crops of timber, differing in kind. The extent, too, to which the earth was literally saturated and crammed with seeds of various trees and plants seemed marvelous. It could not have been that they had lain dormant for ages. Where a well was dug, the earth brought up, from no matter what depth, almost immediately sent up a thick covering of white clover."

The necessity of expecting and enduring hardship, in his later opinion "perhaps had a good effect in establishing a constitution thought to be delicate and inclined to consumption." Like Bryant and Emerson, an apparently fragile youth lived to a good old age and in his case certainly, there was an anticipation of the open-air sanitarium advocated by Oliver Wendell Holmes as far back as 1844. When by day one carries flour, meal, pork, salt, chocolate, a brass kettle, an axe, and a gun, and by night sleeps on pine boughs, neurasthenia and tuberculosis "depart, excede evade, are off, erump." "Was it," he asked in a memorandum written long after, "a time of suffering? No, no! of pleasurable excitement; of hope, health, and mutual kindness. Novelty gilded the scene. There was just enough of danger, toil, and privation to give life a relish."

His favorite lot, Number 39, was in a region surveyed under both Pennsylvania warrants and Connecticut land titles, and was under settlement, as rapidly as possible, by claimants representing both States. "No road," says the *Autobiography,* "had been laid out east or south within fifteen miles of me, nor nearer than ten miles on the west; and the preceding year, 1798, not an inhabitant existed within a circle of ten miles, my cabin being the centre; so that I may claim to have been one of the first settlers in Susquehanna County."

To the boy it seemed a veritable earthly paradise: "In the beech, maple, ash, bass-wood, and wild-cherry lands the earth was free from every hurtful reptile or noxious thing. From having been covered annually for centuries with the fallen leaves the ground was soft and elastic to the tread; springs were abundant, the waters gushing sweetly from the hills. Everything wore the air of newness and virgin freshness as it came from the hands of the Creator. Man, for good or evil, had as yet scarcely scanned it, and it lay outspread before us in all its original purity and beauty. It seemed as if it had been a retiring grove for the repose of Deity, an appurtenance to Paradise, containing himself in its shade, beneath the lofty trees of his own creation."

In the summer of 1799 he visited as much of his land as possible, made some sales, and became acquainted with nearly every inhabitant within ten miles of his cabin. The rough life was diversified by an occasional debate with the supporters of the Pennsylvania claims, one of whom averred that "he was never so posed in his life; a young fellow there, with tow trousers and bare feet, had every fact and date at his fingers' ends, and gave me more trouble in the contest than I ever met in my life." More romantic diversions were such as the escorting of a young woman "over thirteen miles through the wilderness without a horse, she riding the only one we had; I, like a page, coursing my way on foot by her side."

Returning home to Connecticut for a little time in the autumn, his companion was an Enoch Reynolds, who, in the course of "a new path, near twenty miles without a house," enlivened the distance "with tales from Shakespeare, plays with which he was familiar, and I had never seen. Old Lear and his heartless daughters, who had

'tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness like a vulture, here,'

the bloody Richard, the revengeful Othello; above all, the

madcap Petruchio, taming his rampant bride, pleased me much; and I said to myself, 'I'll have that book.' "

The next year his brother Asher "who nearly always had money to lend," to whom Charles, without a penny in his pocket, had cheerfully written: "Come out, and I will set you up," went to Wilkes-Barré, some eighty miles from the lot 39 settlement; and there, and elsewhere in Pennsylvania, made his home for the rest of his life, marrying Mary, daughter of Thomas Wright, long and widely known as a daring real-estate operator, whose grand-daughter, Letitia Wright was to be Charles' wife a few years later.

When, a lad in the north of Ireland, Thomas Wright consulted his schoolmaster as to emigrating to America, he received the reply: "Yes, go, Thomas, you may eat white bread in your old age." Accordingly he came over and became a school-teacher in Dyertown, Pennsylvania, married a Miss Dyer, manufactured iron in New Jersey, "and in 1790, having part in a contract to clean out obstructions in the upper part of the Lehi, he removed to Wilkes-Barré, opened an extensive apartment of goods, purchased farm after farm, took up from the land office large bodies of land—indeed became as bold a speculator as those hard speculating times produced. * * * He would, as he rode his rounds, meet a neighbor, and purchase his farm without alighting from his horse. In this dashing mode of doing business, though often successful, he sometimes got sadly left. [In this way, too, he became a Connecticut claimant by purchase, as shown in the *History of Wyoming,* Page 440.] Passing through the swamp * * * between Wilkes-Barré and Lehi he met a Jerseyman coming in with a load of hollow ware of iron, some pots, but chiefly, Tea-kettles—without examining an article, he purchased the whole and sent in an order for payment. When he returned, behold the kettles had no hollow in the spout and were worthless! No one laughed more heartily, or told the tale more merrily than Mr. Wright. * * * He was now

commissioner of the County, proprietor of the newspaper establishment, had a store in town and one at his Iron-works at Bloomsbury."

In 1795 he built the mill, which, later bought by his son-in-law, Asher, has come by inheritance to his great-grandson, Colonel Asher Miner and his brother. As the enthusiasm of land-speculation grew upon him his free-hearted way of doing business led, as might be easily foreseen, to his being later unable to pay for land he desired, or even to pay the taxes on what he already had, so that eventually he was obliged to sell land. One farm at the junction of the Lackawanna with the Susquehanna, at Pittston, went not for the usual "song" but for a corn-barn full of brooms, which, says family tradition, voiced by his great-granddaughter, Mrs. Ellen Miner Thomas, the rats ate, the land being called "the broom farm," because of this fact. And so "Old Tommy Wright," as he is familiarily known in her family, having eaten his "white bread," became again a poor man, or would have done so but for his son-in-law, Asher's business prudence. Generous to a fault, as many of this type are, it was his "pleasure to call in a poor acquaintance, or even stranger passing by:—'Come in, John, it is past noon—I know you must be hungry; and we have a slice of bread and bacon waiting in the cupboard for you.'"

Of his death the *Autobiography* gives an interesting account: "But we must attend the closing scene. Aged 76 or 7 he felt the near approach of death—Asher wrote his will and was made sole executor. [A very old copy apparently in Asher's writing, is owned by a descendant, Mrs. M. C. Thornhill, Atlantic City, N. J. In this will he gives to Charles Miner "as a matter of my attachment and esteem $100: To his wife Letitia $50. when she shall 'come to age," and to their children Ann and Sarah each one good cow and six sheep.] Having disposed of everything judiciously to suit him he bade Bob his black servant, to brush up the carriage, and have it brought under his

window, he being raised up to see that it was fit to go to his funeral. The well-brushed harness was brought into his room for the like purpose. He sent for his best esteemed friends Judge Fell and lawyer Bowman to come and superintend the burial, and departed, not as if it were a matter of fear, terror or regret—but as retiring from a scene where he had performed his part, 'enjoying the goods the gods provided' or to rest after a long journey, with the most perfect self-collection and placid composure."

Asher, like Charles, learned the printers trade in Norwich, and bought of his father-in-law the Wilkes-Barré *Gazette* founded in 1797, which, under the later name of the *Luzerne County Federalist,* and the *Luzerne Federalist,* was to become a political and local power in the hands of the two brothers. For this enterprise a printing-press of Asher's had been transported by Charles in a sleigh on his return from Norwich, and deposited in Wilkes-Barré, Charles repairing once more to Lot 39, to cut and clear as many acres as possible for incoming settlers. Indeed, in one instance he went so far as to set out an apple-orchard, from which, some forty years afterward, the then owner sent him some excellent fruit. "So," he felicitated himself, "you will see I remembered, before it was written, the advice of Sir Walter Scott 'to be sticking in a tree when you had leisure, for it would grow while you slept.'" This farm is now, 1915, owned by Dr. Norris, of Philadelphia; the orchard has recently had to be cut down, having become affected with the San Jose scale.

Thus, in the pioneer's union of incessant activity and mental serenity, the time went on,—"in active exertion, surveying a little, clearing patches of land on different lots, and selling, chiefly on credit; but receiving enough to render me, in my simple mode of living, independent; paying, when I boarded abroad from my proper home at my bark cabin, a dollar a week." Bread, when he "kept himself," was baked from pounded green corn, mixed with stewed pumpkin; while venison and occasionally a young bear provided

the luxuries. The *Autobiography* tells the usual story of the primitive honesty of isolated humanity: "The two years I was in the beech-woods I never knew or heard of a door being fastened, or an article of property being lost, although things were frequently left exposed in the woods. Our blankets, tools, beds, and cooking-kettle,—our plates and bowls were made of bass-wood,—were left for weeks at the cabin, without a thought of fear."

Meanwhile his spare time was devoted to the militia, in which he did good work (ranking as corporal), having had some previous training at Norwich. Later, in Wilkes-Barré, he was first lieutenant of the "Wyoming Blues." To the end of his days he believed in the militia as an almost necessary foundation of good government; and doubted whether the Revolution itself would have succeeded, or even been attempted, without it. But, living in the Quaker State, he declared it to be a sacred duty to recognize the scruples of those who objected to bearing arms.

Two years were spent in what he called "my beautiful Usher," in constant health and happiness, and with a valuable accumulation of experience, but with meagre financial results, which he grimly summarized as follows: "Cash, $8.00; notes, $203.00, for which I never received a cent, the purchasers having lost their land; due from Thomas Wright, $55.00 for a horse; due from Asher, $10.50; total, $276.50."

In the first year of the new century, "being of age," says the *Autobiography,* "I became a citizen of Pennsylvania. My purpose now was to associate myself with the press, if possible;" but after settling the poor finances of clearings, the need of earning his living, turned him to school-teaching for six months, in Wilkes-Barré, where he boarded with his brother Asher.

In retrospect he writes: "It would be superfluous to say that Wilkes-Barre has wonderfully changed since it first met my view. The ferry was kept opposite Northampton

street, in front of Mr. Butler's. Starting from the ferry, and going up that street (towards Easton) to Main Street, there was on the left hand only one house, that of Mr. Dupuy. Turning up Main Street to the Public Square, there was, on the left, only one house, the tavern, now occupied as such. Turning northwesterly along the Public Square, to Market Street, and thence down to where the bridge now stands, there was not a house on the left. Neither the meeting-house nor the court-house [afterwards erected in the Public Square] was then built. Franklin Street, on which are the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, was not then laid out. From the Public Square to the river, on the right side of the way, was the building now [1844] Cahoon's store, then occupied by Joseph Wright, Esq. The house recently occupied by Col. Lamb, at the corner, my brother had obtained of his father-in-law, part as a gift and part as a purchase, where he resided and had the printing-office. A small one-story house stood on the lot now occupied by the large hotel of Col. Dennis of which I shall speak presently; and at the corner opposite Mr. Hollenback's large brick building was a tavern owned by Thomas Wright and kept by Mr. Hurlbut, not long since sheriff. * * * The town plot was yet covered with pine and oak bushes." Mr. Miner soon afterward rented the one-story house and lot mentioned above,—seventy feet front and a hundred deep, for twenty dollars a year, with leave to purchase for $200. "If it were now [1844] without buildings it would bring nearly $100 a foot." * * *

"* * * Reviewing the vast improvement in our beautiful Borough, with so much pride and satisfaction, I could not help detaining you a moment to show what it was since my remembrance. Though out of place one thing I will say here. Not a building ought to be allowed to be erected, in the thickly populated part of the town, that is not fire-proof. The steep roof—which cannot be walked on—covered with pine shingles, which, in two summers become

like tinder, to catch and kindle every spark of fire, ought to be repudiated—done away with, and roofs nearly level formed, covered with zinc, having trap doors, like the hatches of a ship, perfectly water tight, substituted in their stead. A neat railing round the roof would be ornamental, while for airing clothes, or affording a pleasant view, it would be useful and agreeable * * *.

"But the portraiture and sketches illustrative of men and manners as they appeared in Wilkes-Barre forty years ago, are not yet half finished. Nearly a dozen of the elder personages, Gen. Lord Butler, Judges Hollenback, Denison and Fell, Lawyer Bowman, Capt. S. Bowman, Sheriff Dorrance, Nathan Palmer, Prothonotary, and others, I have sketched elsewhere and may possibly append the brief but pretty accurate pictures, to these memoirs. Familiar to many of my readers they are now omitted or postponed to make way for a view of more youthful society.

"The songs of the day, especially of the young ladies, return with their sweet cadences to the ear, and demand notice.

"Miss Lydia Butler's song, 'Alloway House,' has been mentioned, Miss Nancy Butler's (afterward Mrs. Robinson) favorite had this chorus:

'See content, the humble gleaner,
Takes the scattered ears that fall
Nature all her children viewing
Kindly bounteous, cares for all.'

"Miss Stevens (afterward Mrs. Dana) sang to us:

'At the close of the day when the hamlet is still
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard from the hill
And nought but the nightingale sang in the grove!'

"Miss Letitia Wright, 'Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doon' with an artless sweetness, extremely pleasing. Miss Mary Wright (Br. Asher's wife):

'As Cupid in the garden stray'd
And sported by a damask's shade
A little bee unseen among
The silver leaves his finger stung.'

Which beautiful Anacreontic, by the way is, in my opinion, a better translation than that, by Moore.

'Cupid once upon a bed
Of roses laid his weary head
Luckless urchin not to see
Within the leaves a slumbering bee.'

"But we have hardly leisure now for criticism.

"Miss Maria Hodgkinson (since Mrs. Overton) sang with unsurpassing (*sic*) sweetness 'The Vale of Avoca.' 'There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,' which gave us all double pleasure, for we applied the line to our own loved Wyoming.

"Brother Asher never pretended to sing unless the chorus to 'Adams and Liberty' or 'Hail Columbia' on the 4th of July, and as for myself, with snatches of a line or two, of almost every song I had heard, 'Tom Bowling' was the only one I could sing, when there was no escape, and that I never got through with correctly * * *." Then follows a description of men of business, commissioners, lawyers trooping out to the river bank to play base ball, or trying to see who could go straightest, blindfolded, from Anheuser's store to the broadside of the church: "Poor sinners that we were, not one in ten could reach the church.

"It was not the fashion of the day and place for the young men to herd by themselves, drinking, smoking or gambling. I never knew an instance among our young men of one going into a tavern to ask for a small glass or a large one. The first thought of amusement for the evening brought with it the enquiry where shall we meet the girls—do they take tea at Mr. Carpenter's, Mr. Brown's, Mr. Lathrop's, Mr. Nevin's of Mr. Huntington's—If at neither let us gather them together."

Self-education of the best kind was meanwhile eagerly pursued, for Ebenezer Bowman, who had the best library in town, "opened it without reserve" to the young man, who "found it an ocean of sweets, an incomparable treasure, what my soul longed for, without knowing the object that would satisfy it. I read, I devoured; and thenceforward through life have been a hard student, appetite increasing with gratification." Macpherson's *Ossian,* then deemed a genuine epic, specially delighted him; and as he trudged to his school-house,—on what was afterwards known as Hibler's hill, near the present Vulcan Iron Works, a mile and a quarter below the Public Square,—with his dinner in a basket and a translation of Homer's Iliad under his arm, he longed for noon with "an infinitely greater desire" for the tale of Troy divine than for the sandwiches and cheese. "I love Hector, and never read the line 'Troy charged the first and Hector first of Troy,' but my heart almost leaped from my bosom." More practical, though not more enthusiastic, was a thorough reading of Blackstone's *Commentaries,* for which he paid six dollars and a half of his scanty money. In after times, "when brought in conflict with learned and ready opponents, the knowledge obtained from Blackstone was a signal success."

The terms of tuition in his school, for pupils all the way from the ABC children to young men of his own age, were fifty cents a quarter per scholar—that is, for a term of twelve weeks. One of his pupils, it is said, was little Letitia Wright; another like himself, was afterwards in Congress: Amasa Dana, of New York, "a gentleman of talent and virtue," but unfortunately "a Loco of the purest of Van Buren water."

His heart, however, was ever in journalism; and having proved himself, in his brother's office, a quick and accurate compositor and a paragraphist whose work was read and copied, he was admitted as partner in the concern, and on Monday, May 2, 1802, the *Luzerne Federalist* appeared

with the names of "A. & C. Miner" as editors and proprietors. A manuscript note, not in the *Autobiography,* explains the circumstances: "[Asher] requiring some assistance, I gladly aided him through the winter, in the course of which my early acquired knowledge of type-setting came in excellent play, and I would compose my journeyman's days work, by pretty close application; and work the Press with my brother, pulling and beating [illegible] alternately. But I was ambitious to become an editor, and write for the paper. At length, with some misgivings whether it would do, Asher admitted an article, the first you will observe, ever printed of my composition, and lo! before a week elapsed, it came back in a respectable daily print of Philadelphia. This matter of approbation, so pleasing to my vanity, so grateful to my pride, removed every doubt, and henceforth my contributions were made welcome."

A few fleeting admirations for other girls are recorded in the *Autobiography;* but he seems to have half fallen in love with his future wife when she was only three years older than Dante's Beatrice at the poet's first sight of her. Of his first meeting with Thomas Wright, after Asher's marriage to his only daughter, Charles says: "I of course was charmed with him;" and adds "This is a capital beginning for a Yankee boy, thought I; isn't there another for me? But Mary was an only daughter, and she was a favorite child. But there was running about a pretty, merry, pouting-lipped granddaughter, bright, laughing and forward as a universal favorite and pet could be, aged not quite thirteen, of whom I may speak hereafter."

About two and a half years later, on January 16, 1804, came the greatest external event in Charles Miner's life; his marriage to Letitia Wright, the "merry * * * granddaughter" of Thomas Wright. Many years later her daughter Ellen used to tell of the little girl-wife playing with her dolls, and hiding them behind the door if she heard any one coming, but forty-eight years of unvarying happi-

LETITIA MINER

CHARLES MINER

ness followed, as is attested by every memory of their children and associates, and by his numerous letters, still carefully preserved,—from which frequent citations will be made in that portion of this memoir devoted to his congressional career.

The patience and courtesy of the young couple (Charles was twenty-three and Letitia fifteen) were certainly strained to the utmost, though they never gave way, by the fact that, within three or four months after their marriage, Mrs. Miner's father and mother came to live with them. Joseph Wright was himself only between thirty-five and forty years old, and, according to the hearty testimony of his son-in-law, "highly intelligent, and of manners wonderfully pleasing," a good talker, reader, and singer, and an honest magistrate; but unfortunately addicted to liquor. The *Autobiography,* by what it says and does not say, sufficiently indicates the strain put on the young couple for many years; but endurance, by no means unfortified by real affection, triumphed.

He speaks of "our very small and inconvenient abode—small you may suppose for two families, when I paid but twenty dollars a year rent. Letitia and I could not help it but took the matter as philosophically as possible. * * * Letitia was to me all that my heart and my judgment sought for; they were her father and mother; and that decided the matter." And on Mr. Wright's death, more than twenty years later, his son-in-law wrote in real distress from Washington " * * * Poor Father, and yet, all his good qualities —his fine literary tastes—his love for the children—his readings to Sarah—his attachment to me, all come over my heart."

The only peccadillo time has preserved is a story of his early married life which he tells with pride: "But our society, rarely exceeded in virtue, was not without its shades of evil. Card playing had crept in among us * * * a set of jovial fellows used to take a *Tiff,* that was the

cant word, and I, who just knew the Queen of Hearts from the Jack of Spades, took a hand." One night the fascination was stronger than usual "and it was late breakfast time before we sallied out. For myself, with compressed lip, and more shame than my pride would be willing to avow, I marched for home uncertain whether I should find Letitia in tears, or prepared to give me a lecture on my evil doings. 'What did I care, was I not a man, independent, who had a right to call me to account? I'd let the world know—I was master of my own actions'—and so stepped into the door. Lo! there were neither frown nor tears. A smile of cheerfulness and welcome (I won't answer for the smile in the heart) bade me good morning. The table was set with more than ordinary care—the cloth whiter—the coffee clear as amber, and not a word or allusion to where I had been. * * * The discretion—the good sense—the tact on the part of my very young, but very good wife were admirable; and after sleep and time had restored the proper tone, I resolved, no formal pledge, but made up my mind never so to offend again, and never have."

"The year 1804 was especially memorable to me for four circumstances. Married, January 16th. In May brother Asher and I dissolved business connections, I purchasing the establishment and becoming sole proprietor of the *Luzerne Federalist*. On the 24th of October new and tenderest sympathies were awakened by the birth of a daughter whom we named Anna Charlton, after my beloved Mother, and Nov. 3 the death of that Mother, of whom I have often spoken, and of whom it is impossible for me to speak without emotions of deepest veneration and love. It is balm to my heart that I never purposely offended her; I caused her no sorrow, I awakened in her bosom no pain (I do not mean to exempt myself from the trifling forwardness of a petted child, or that I somteimes lingered longer with my playmates than the allotted hour) unless by leaving her when duty demanded of me to seek my fortune from home, and leave her. She died of consumption aged 60 years.

"Asher [grandfather of Charles A. Miner] with his growing family (he having two children, and as I dandled them both on my knee, loved them then and love them still, I cannot refrain from saying, the oldest was Anna Maria, the amiable wife of Dr. Abraham Stout, the other Thomas Wright, named as you may suppose after his grandfather; now, I need hardly add, Physician of Wilkes-Barre, whose skill and success give him a just fame which needs no compliment from my pen to enhance) Asher had wisely, and with that enterprise that distinguished him, cast about for some mode of extending his business. * * * His mind turned to Doylestown * * * [and] after visiting the place he resolved to try the experiment, removed, established the *Correspondent* * * * mounted his horse and rode with true Yankee perseverance, to every town and village soliciting subscriptions * * *. Business flowed in upon him * * * and placed Asher in a position of entire comfort, with a fair prospect of independence. In parting with him allow me in justice to add; his business habits, his methods, his prudence, were of especial use to me, although I never attained to the perfection that distinguished him. * * * His judgment was sound, his morals pure, all his affections kindly, his habits and manners agreeable. Confidence and good will, the esteem of manhood, as the love of childhood, flowed uninterruptedly between us, and we separated with regret from motives solely prudential."

The name of the *Federalist* was changed to *Luzerne Federalist* and *Susquehanna Intelligencer,* and, with Charles as sole editor and proprietor, was published at two dollars a year, plus fifty cents for delivery by post-riders, payment being largely in goods which were collected along the Susquehanna river for a hundred miles and brought home by boat, often by the proprietor himself. A little advertising and some collateral book and pamphlet printing eked out the revenues of the office; the first book issued being the poems of Samson Occom, the Indian taught by Eleazer Wheelock, whose preaching in England was so decisive a

factor in the collection of the funds used to establish Wheelock's Indian charity school, out of which grew Dartmouth College.

That Mr. Miner was a kind employer, successful in winning affection in the printing office, is plain, for on one occasion he received a communication containing this unique tribute: "May God bless you and keep you, is the undying wish of your devil"!

The *Federalist* was a steady and useful promoter of the then declining fortunes of the political party which gave it its name, and which he loyally supported during the long period preceding the revival of Federal Whiggism, as the National Republican party of John Quincy Adams twenty-four years later. "The reader will bear in mind," says the *Autobiography,* "That the great political contest which eventuated in the overthrow of the Federal party and the election of Jefferson and Burr had just taken place; that party passions were holding Saturnalia throughout the union; that in Pennsylvania especially the elections of Governor McKean, the Democratic candidate, over J. Ross of Pittsburgh, had added bitterness to the conflict; and that in Luzerne the flames of party rancour raged with scorching vehemence."

"The paper was freely opened to those who differed from us as well as to those with whom we accorded, ever with liberal impartiality. With the Federal colors flying at the masthead, our Democratic fellow-citizens, the *Wilkes-Barre Gazette* having ceased to be published, were always welcome to the use of our pages. I do not believe I ever, in my life, rejected an essay, sent me in good faith, by an opponent, and when a candidate myself, proceedings of meetings, hostile to my nomination were admitted without hesitation."

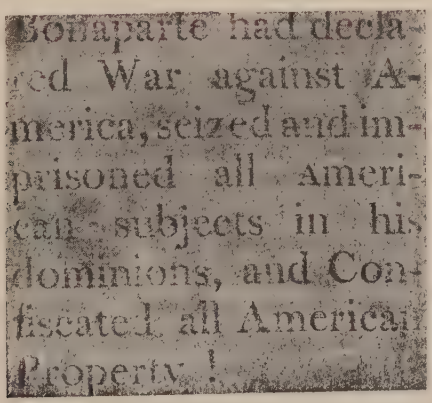
Again, when first elected to the Legislature, he opened his columns to his oponents to "taunt my faults with such full license as truth and malice have power to utter."

The *Federalist* contained some local news and general

matter: "The land dispute was now at its height, and I wrote, besides numerous paragraphs, a course of essays under the signature of Leonidas, in behalf of the Connecticut settlers and their claims." Before the days of the regular editorial, the "printer," who was identical with the editor, in many journals adopted the Addisonian method of enlightening his readers on all sorts of topics—moral, religious, and literary, as well as political. Foreign "intelligence," in the years when the whole world was shadowed by the malign Bonaparte, wading through slaughter to a throne, was not the less important because it was belated for months, and deviously transmitted. Once, at least, October 28, 1808, the *Federalist* indulged in one of the earliest "displays" I have found in any American newspaper, which I reproduce in scale: The "scare-heads" were

Important!
WAR!

and then, after saying that the report had come through a couple of sailing-vessels, the paper went on to chronicle the dire news that


Bonaparte had declared War against America, seized and imprisoned all American subjects in his dominions, and Confiscated all American Property!

[1805?] "As I was in the midst of politics, knee deep—elbow deep, sleeves rolled up for the work, my young political readers, may be pleased to know what was the aspect of Political affairs at that period or 40 years ago. The view is curious and not uninteresting:—In 1799, and 1800, the great revolution had taken place, which gave the Democratic Party the ascendency in Pennsylvania and in the National Government. The Federalists, the great current of their measures having been wise and essentially successful, conscious alike of the purity of their patriotism, their integrity of purpose and of their, at least, equal claim to talents, were astonished at the issue; and braced their nerves for a contest to regain the ascendency. How vain were their efforts history has recorded. It is not to be denied the Democrats understood the nature of man and the springs of human action, with a distinctness compared with which the Federalists were mere purblind novices. In courtship of the People the 'bowing popularly low' they beat us a bar's length at every throw, and the masses rallied to their standard.

"Major Russell with his able co-adjutors of the Boston Gazette, New England Palladium, Worcester Spy, and other Massachusetts papers; Pickering, Fisher Ames, Harrison Gray Otis, a prominent leader in the Bay State—The Connecticut Courant at Hartford, with the Dwights, Criswold and Tracy, Dana and other conspicuous leaders in Connecticut; Hamilton, the Van Rensselaers, the Evening Post, with Coleman at its head—The Spectator with Noah Webster as its chief editor—the Balance with inimitable Crosswell as its conductor, presented a Grecian phalanx in New York, [illegible] firm, and resolved. The Pennsylvanian C. P. Wayne, and afterwards Brownson and Chauncy, and their able correspondents, rendered the U. S. Gazette a spirited battery; Dennie with his Portfolio, part literary, and part politics, with the aid of the laborious Rolf and the prudent Paulson roused the City Federalists

to quarters, while William Hamilton, of Lancaster, the playful Billy Blackberry of epigram and song, rendered his Gazette effective. I hail also with singular pleasure the recollection of the 'Adams Sentinel,' the Franklin Repository, the Bedford Gazette, the Pittsburgh Gazette as co-laborers, with the more humble but not less zealous 'Luzerne Federalist' in the cause of resuscitating decaying Federalism. But one might as well have attempted to row up Niagara Falls. The argument and wit were of course fairly with us; but as for the rest, [in] the biting satire, the scorching sarcasm, the withering [illegible] barbed, feathered and sent for deepest penetration, the opposition we thought were quite our match. At home all the Popular stream was against us, Jefferson's red breeches * * * his mellifluous accents and inimitably popular style took with the popular taste; but the acquisition of Louisiana, the opening the whole extent of the Mississippi to commerce, * * * gave him and his administration claim to public consideration, which established his party effectually in power, and bore him on in triumph. * * * In 1803 of the eighteen Representatives in Congress from Pennsylvania there was not one Federalist. In the State Senate there was one, and in the House only 5."

During this busy time he greatly valued the associations of the masonic lodge to which he always remained loyally attached, and of his admission to which he wrote: "But I was 'a man of full age and under the tongue of good report' and longed to have disclosed to me the secrets of a 'free and accepted Mason' * * *. Judge Fell led me ('oh, how my poor heart panted') and John Paul Schott, Esq., as Master of the Lodge, brought me to Light."* Also he enjoyed the debating society, in which the clash of argument and wit formed a sort of post-graduate course of the "Beechwood Academy": "I look back to our Debating

*For a full account of his Masonic relations see "History of Lodge No. 61," by Oscar J. Harvey, Esq., Wilkes-Barré, Pa., in which the first sketch ever published of Mr. Miner appears.

School with great pleasure, and as a source of improvement infinitely exceeding the value of the time and labor expended."

The little office had occasionally been able to do some printing for Philadelphia patrons; and Mr. Miner made his first visit to "the great city." "Hartford and Newburg, Norwich and New London I had seen, but never so great a place as Philadelphia. Its order, its vastness, its regularity, were all enchantment to me"; and so were Peale's Museum, Cooper as Richard III, Jefferson in "The Village Lawyer"—Peale's pictures of Revolutionary worthies "enchaining attention with emotions of pleasure almost extending to pain."

Some time later but of uncertain date, probably 1806, he visited Philadelphia again on his return from a trip to Washington. The *Autobiography* says: "A voyage down the [Susquehanna] river in a canoe extended into a journey to Washington City * * *. Thomas Wright, Esquire, owned the old forge place at Lackawanna where he had a bloomery making excellent iron." It was hoped the authorities at Washington might consider establishing a foundry for arms and cannon, so in company with Arnold Colt, who was to share in the enterprise if successful, he started * * *. "We launched a canoe, put on board a small basket of provisions and armed each with a paddle and setting pole, we pushed into the river to pursue our journey. I cannot help saying that in reviewing this matter it seems to me strongly marked temerity and folly * * *. That we passed through Nanticoke and other falls and ripples without upsetting or accident seems almost a miracle. Six or eight miles below Sunbury we attached our canoe to a raft and were upset in 'the great Canawaga falls.' Deeply I drank of the angry stream * * * with the loss of our canoe and the gain of a good ducking we got safely through, having acquired some character for firmness." * * * On reaching Lancaster "I had the pleasure for the first time to see the assembled

wisdom of Pennsylvania in legislative session * * *. The scene was full of pleasure and romance. I will not say a secret thought did not steal into my mind that if I behaved well and exerted myself honorably, I might at some future day find my way there. Certainly the idea of an immediate, or even early enjoyment of what I esteemed so high an honor did not enter into my conception." * * * On arriving at Washington "and having an interview with Mr. Gallatin then at the head of the Treasury, I found little encouragement to hope that my speculations would succeed, the Government, inclined to a spacific policy, being neither authorized nor disposed to establish a cannon foundry or armory, especially so far in the interior. * * * I visited the President's House, had a glimpse of, but no introduction, to President Jefferson, but we were very civilly shown the rooms, and as was the European fashion, the State bed, in a recess, very elegant, in which Mr. Jefferson *did not* sleep. My ambitions were not then so aroused as to imagine what happened twenty years afterward, that I should be one of a Committee of Congress * * * to visit the President's House, to inspect and report on the furniture, every room being thrown open to us * * *." Leaving Washington after a week "all charm and romance to my yet youthful and inexperienced mind," he set out for Philadelphia. "And here I first saw Matthew Carey, that most indefatigable of men and of Booksellers. Introducing myself I told him that as publisher of the *Luzerne Federalist* I printed various blanks for sale and the thought had struck me that money could be made by the sale of school and other books, but cash I had none, and the question was, would he let me have one or two hundred dollars worth on credit. 'You are a stranger, sir, is there any person with whom you are acquainted in the city you could refer me to?'—'Not a soul'—'Well, well,' relaxing into a smile and a pleasant one, 'I'll venture to trust that face to the amount you specify.' The acquaintance then formed ripened not into intimacy or

friendship, but into confidence and hearty good will continuing through life. Lame, from a wound received in the foot in a duel with Oswald, (if my information be correct) he limped a good deal, otherwise he was a handsome man with a fine, round, expressive face, full of animation—passionate—placable—just—generous—benevolent. Highly intelligent and enterprising, for many years Mr. Carey exercised an extensive influence both on the politics and business of the city."

Mr. Miner's first appearance in public life was as clerk of election, for which he received $1.50, the most money he had ever earned in a day. In 1806 he was chosen a member of the first borough council of Wilkes-Barre, "in company with Judge Hollenback, Gen. Butler, and others of the old substantial gentlemen who took office to set matters agoing in the right direction. Being comparatively a poor boy among these wealthy veterans, I was proud enough to be pleased with the honor." The next year he was made one of the first Board of Trustees of the local Academy of which he was one of the incorporators; but his conspicuous public career began in the autmun of the same year, when, to his surprise, he was elected a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from Luzerne county. Or, as the *Autobiography* puts it, "the year 1807 became very unexpectedly one of the most memorable of my life; as a chain of circumstances arose which led me to a position not in the distance unhoped for, but which even the throbbing impulses of my ambitious heart had not whispered was near at hand. A sharp quarrel with Judge Thomas Cooper placed me prominently in the lead of an exasperated, high-spirited, and generous people."

Letters passed between Mr. Miner and Judge Cooper, published in the *Luzerne Federalist* in May, 1807:

"* * * I well remember when my friend Jesse Fell brought me Judge Cooper's letter, he looked as if he entertained great doubts whether I would publish it * * *. 'Will

you print it, Charles?'—'Certainly.'" Judge Cooper was dining with friends when the paper containing Mr. Miner's reply was handed to him:

"As he read it with increasing eagerness he would exclaim 'D——it, D——it, D——it,' till he got to the end when bursting into a laugh he said, 'The Dog has talents for all.'"

Thomas Cooper had, after due trial, and a plea of guilty on the part of the accused, sentenced a boy of fifteen to one year's imprisonment for horse-stealing. The same day two citizens of good repute, both of them friends and neighbors of Mr. Miner, told the judge that the boy had been otherwise objectionable, and that a longer sentence would do him good. Judge Cooper, accordingly, ordered him before the court the next morning, and changed the sentence from one year to three; but learning that the crier had called a court of common pleas and not one of quarter sessions—to which the case belonged—caused a quarter sessions court to be opened, and sentenced the boy a third time.

Such a procedure was of course opposed to law and common decency, and, if made a precedent or a practice, intolerable; which facts Mr. Miner very vigorously set forth in his newspaper. Judge Cooper retorted in a long and haughty letter, which left the real case exactly where it had been; and gave Mr. Miner a capital chance, which he promptly accepted, to make a crushing rejoinder, of which the following sentences were the nub:

"This mode of condemnation appears as new to me as it it unjust. If Gough had stolen money, and there were witnesses in town to prove the fact, why was not the attorney for the State notified, and directed to proceed legally against him? Or if you chose to dispense with the dull forms of law, would it not have been at least proper to have ordered the witnesses into court, together with the prisoner, and, in the face of the public have obliged them

on oath to declare what they knew against the prisoner? Our Constitution, formed, I believe, before your arrival in this country, declares that in all criminal prosecutions the accused hath a right to be heard by himself and his counsel; to demand the nature and cause of the accusation against him; and to meet the witnesses face to face."

Very effective use was also made of the Blackstone bought with the scanty earnings of the young school-teacher, and now brought to bear against a judge:

"Be so good as to listen to what Judge Blackstone says of such evidence: 'In cases of felony at the common law, confessions of the prisoner made to persons not legally authorized to receive them are the weakest and most suspicious of all testimony, ever liable to be obtained by artifice, false hopes, promises of favor, or menaces; seldom remembered accurately or reported with due precision, and being incapable in their nature of being disproved by other negative evidence.' * * * The same excellent author whom I have quoted says: 'The Judge shall be counsel for the prisoner; that is, he shall see that the proceedings against him are strictly legal and regular."

Of Judge Cooper he generously wrote, long after the echoes of the controversy had died away:

"Judge Thomas Cooper was an educated adventurer, one of the many who found asylum along the banks of the Susquehanna river. It was a society of distinguished talents which gathered at the confluence of the north and west branches early in this century. Born in London, educated at Oxford, admitted to the bar, a natural philosopher, and a natural agitator, he followed his friend Dr. Joseph Priestly to his retreat at Northumberland. On his way Mr. Cooper took his seat in the French Assembly, along with Mr. Watt, as representative of the Manchester Philosophical Society. Judge Cooper and John M. Taylor were appointed Commissioners to put in execution the Acts of Assembly of Pennsylvania, offering compensation to the

Pennsylvania claimants and conferring Connecticut titles. To Judge Cooper is due the credit of that most righteous compromise. He removed to South Carolina, where his distinguished talents had called him to preside over Columbia College" [the University of South Carolina.]

Mr. Miner's Federalist blood was stirred by the fact that his opponent was a Democrat; but in this instance the representatives of the two parties changed ground, for Judge Cooper was exercising the very arbitrariness which had aroused the Democrats against the Alien and Sedition laws of the John Adams administration under which laws Cooper himself had been fined four hundred dollars and six months imprisonment, for libel against the president, in 1800. In a brilliant sketch of Judge Cooper, a little earlier in the *Autobiography,* it is said: "Prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned (as he deserved) his room was the resort of the political Elite of the Democratic party of the city, and his pen rendered the *Aurora* a splendid corruscation of playful satire, or bitter invective. The song which made more Democrats than all the reasoning in or out of Congress is said to have been a production of his versatile genius when in confinement.

'When morning's first blushes first illumine the east,
I haste to my daily employment,
I grub all the day while the well-born can feast,
For they can afford the enjoyment.

'Our rulers can feast on six dollars a day,
The poor must be taxed this extortion to pay,
And if I against them do anything say,
In jail I must lie for sedition.' " etc.

The result of this controversy with Judge Cooper was that without any personal effort Mr. Miner was elected in October, 1807, to the legislature by a practically non-partisan vote, and twice re-elected, each time by a larger majority. "Disregarding party lines the people took me; a large

number of Democrats, in their generous enthusiasm, forgetting the Federal printer in the defender of popular rights * * *. It seems now [1844] to me that the excitement produced was greatly disproportionate to the cause; it was like a spark in a keg of gunpowder; and from being well and kindly regarded, I became at once a popular favorite, and drank deep of the delirious cup of public applause * * *. Do not doubt that the gratification was extreme; I question whether Napoleon, when he encircled his brow with the imperial diadem, was better pleased than the Yankee boy who had made maple sugar with Joe Sprague, tied his shirt into a knapsack and gone into the deep forest, sleeping on the ground under a bark roof, to commence a farm." He also reflected with legitimate pride that the Norwich folks would not think that he had done badly; and added: "Agreeable as the result was to myself, yet let me say it was in a seven-fold degree more so because I knew it would fill the heart to overflowing of my beloved father."

On the last existing page of the *Autobiography* he says: "It might naturally be expected that the first movement I should make in the House, would be for a Committee to enquire into the conduct of Judge Cooper with a view to his removal * * *. I think his removal would have been easy. But then I had not a particle of ill will against him * * * I am not sure but there was an undercurrent of feeling leading to something like this: 'Thank you, sir, for an opportunity to distinguish myself in a contest with one so able. If you are satisfied, I am.' * * * More and most weighty was the reason that Judge Cooper had been the soul of the Commission for settling the titles of the old Yankee settlers * * * and of all men he was fittest to adjudicate upon and carry into effect the act. * * * Barring his hastiness and overbearing manner occasionally, he was an excellent judge, and I did not doubt his integrity. But several years afterwards, when president of another district, complaints were

made against him, and I believe the effective charges grew out of the former contest here * * * and he was removed by Governor Snyder on an Address of both houses."

On page 455 of the "History of Wyoming" he adds: "It is proper here to say, that to Thomas Cooper, Esq., one of the commissioners under the compromising law, in 1803 and 1804, the settlers within the seventeen townships, and the Commonwealth, are largely indebted. He gave to the subject the most devoted attention of a mind remarkably sagacious, vigorous and clear. He unravelled with unexceeded patience and perspecuity, the mazes of this most intricate subject; * * *"

With the whole matter of the Connecticut claims treated at large in the History, and elsewhere, it has been thought best only to touch on it here in this slight way, but one more passage from the *Autobiography* will serve to show how the settlement effected Mr. Miner personally, and his broad, unselfish views of its general advantages:

"Thus ended the intrusion law and prosecutions under it. So terminated the not only imposing, but absolutely threatening power of the Susquehanna and Delaware companies, claiming under title from the charter from Connecticut and various Indian purchases all northeastern Pennsylvania. And thus were prostrated my individual expectations, long since diminished and gradually lessened to a faint ray of hope, of a fortune from the ownership of several thousand acres in Locke, Dandolo, the Manor, and Usher [Townships], including my beautiful lot 39. Essential benefits nevertheless flowed in upon Pennsylvania from this moss-trooping inroad of Yankees. Large numbers of settlers from New England, attracted thither by the favorable accounts of the pioneers, and the final adjustment of the land controversy, came in with considerable means and purchased, so that at this day when I write [1844?] all the upper parts of Luzerne, Wyoming, Wayne, Susquehanna and Bradford counties, the chief scenes of the half share

controversy, present a population so industrious, moral and progressive, that it may vie with any settlement in the state or we may confidently add in the Union."

One personal letter must be disposed of here before passing to more general matters, and the work of the assembly. His first long absence from home since his marriage caused the young father to dwell very seriously on the thought of parental responsibility, and aged twenty-eight he wrote the long, earnest, if somewhat stilted letter, from which extracts follow, to his wife then less than twenty.

"LANCASTER, March 8, 1808.

"* * * A good deal of enquiry is made about you, who you look like, and all such questions, and some of the girls have flattered me so much as to say that they know I have a most excellent wife or I would not be so steady and circumspect in my conduct. I hope I never may behave ill —I hope my conduct may never excite a tear on the cheek of my Lettie, or a sigh or a blush from my children or friends. I am very sure that our happiness will always be in proportion to our virtue. * * * When I reflect on home and you—you I find are the first and most dear object that my mind rests upon. But my children [at this time Ann and Sarah] excite more solicitude than they used to do, I played with them—I loved them—they were pretty little objects to amuse myself with, and I was interested for their healths. Now they appear to me of greater importance * * * as rational beings formed to take a part on the theater of life, and accountable hereafter for their actions * * * and Letitia, their behaviour * * * their happiness—perhaps their virtues may depend on us. * * * But on a mother who is always with them does the most responsibility rest, for she has more influence on their minds. I pray you then to make yourself such a mother as you would wish your daughters to be when they grow up to take the cares of a family, and instil into their minds both by precept and example those virtuous sentiments you are so capable of inculcating."

On arriving at Lancaster (the State capital when Mr. Miner first sat as representative), he writes in the two existing letters to his wife describing some of the people he met; at his boarding-house he had for a companion, "Charles Thompson, the secretary of the old congress, one of the patriots of the Revolution, and a venerable old man he is." Other fellow-boarders were: "A jolly fat Quaker and two smooth-faced cits. from Philadelphia, trying to get a charter for a bank, the inducements being wine and bribery. Despicable indeed must be their opinion of the legislature if they think to buy a charter with grog. * * * They offer, however, $75,000 besides, whether it will be accepted or not I do not know, but I rather think it will."

He gives, too, in the last pages of the *Autobiography*, with gentle humor, a few sketches of his associates in the Assembly, whose small vanities did not escape him, always softening his remarks with a word of appreciation for the man's ability:

"Charles Smith of Lancaster, possessed genius of the highest order united with many eccentricities. He was the most pleasing and persuasive speaker I had then ever heard. Of his oddities I may here mention, that he often seemed lost in a brown study, and I have seen him suddenly rise from his seat—tapping the lid of his silver snuff box, as with a half shuffle he moved up the aisle, singing audibly enough to excite a smile through the House,

'Old King Cole was a jolly old Soul.'

"* * * Dr. Michael Leib was the Magnus Apollo of the [democratic] party, and Grand Sachem of the Tammany bucktails, in the City and Northern Liberties. Not tall but of good form, bold Roman, florid features—dressed in the extreme of fashion—hair powdered, and highly essenced, he was instantly a marked object to the stranger entering the gallery. As a speaker he was full of animation, meaning always, and proving often to be, keen in retort; but never a close reasoner. He produced effect rather by

the velocity of his missles, than the weight of his metal. He had a habit, with a good deal, and not ungraceful gesture, of ever and anon raising his right hand and placing the thumb on the right side of the nose, his fore or middle finger on the ridge and stroking down, not without grace, his nasal organ; then flourishing his hand abroad, displaying his white ruffles and repeating the gesture. Mr. Ingham used to annoy him a good deal in his shrewd replies, pointing his thumb behind him, and alluding 'to the powdered member the other side of the post.' * * *

"Gen. Ogle was an 'I by itself I.' He hailed from Somerset, from whence 'more of the same name and sort' if not more talents, but more refinement and education, have appeared on the public stage. More than six feet in height—slender—bent a little, his face was like an eagle's —a prominent and aquiline beak—an eye of fire, he was a very marked character. His seat was in the south-west corner of the House, his back to the gallery rail—his right hand to the wall on which was spread a large map of Pennsylvania. When he was to speak every eye was turned toward him—striking his right pocket back, and looking at the map, he would give a puff, as if it were a half sneeze from his nose and then in a loud rather shrill voice call 'Mr. Speaker.' In Congress Hall he would amuse himself by shutting quickly his steel tobacco box, making the echoes all over the House."

Mr. Miner became at once a hard working member; the legislature convened at Lancaster on December 4, 1807, and he was appointed on the committee on schools, and that on the militia, besides being put on two other committees appointed to consider petitions presented by him:—that settlers in Luzerne county might share in the privileges granted to other townships, and for a lottery to aid in finishing a church in Wilkes-Barré and to protect the river bank from further damage by the water. The next day he reported, favorably, of course, at some length for the

committee on the lottery, so that one is rather surprised to find him so frightened, when, he makes his first motion, on the 14th of the same month, as he amusingly describes himself to be in the *Autobiography* "I had introduced a resolution the object of which was to exclude small bank bills [of less than five dollars from other states] from circulation. Leib without directly objecting, called me up to defend it. I attempted to do so, but every pillar in the house turned dark, and down I sat. I had spoken in our debating society, but found this a very different affair. Not long after Leib having introduced resolutions laudatory of Mr. Jefferson's administration, I prepared myself with a good deal of care this time, as our good Methodist friends were wont to say 'I found freedom' and said my say I believe to the general satisfaction. Immediately on sitting down a dozen friends came, took me by the hand, and said 'very well.' Even Leib, who with all his spit-fire violence was not destitute of generous sentiments, came over on the House adjourning and complimented me—but said I'll give it to you, my good fellow. I do not find that the little speech (for none of us talked long) was reported, but I remember the conclusion from this flattering circumstance. The next time—months after—on visiting Philadelphia I met my excellent friend, Charles W. Hare, who extending both hands exclaimed: 'Mr. Speaker, it is National Honour that defends National Independence. Here would I plant the American standard—nail the colour to the flag-staff, and never yield it but with existence' * * * I take pride that though a zealous politician in my legislative career I introduced no mere party topics."

He soon wrote to his friend, Steuben Butler, of Wilkes-Barré.

"My oratory is very awkward, when put in competition with that of the others; but I let dash at them. I do not perceive that my enemies—political, I mean—respect me the less, nor that the affection of my friends has decreased from my attempts."

In the same letter he records the unsuccessful attempt of the opposite party to get the vote of a man, absolutely needed to break a tie, "by making him drunk; but he voted right all the same, time after time." To celebrate this triumph of justice, Mr. Miner and his friends adjourned, after the labors of the day, to a neighboring tavern, "and took supper of tripe, wine, songs, and other good things." In another letter, the next term he writes to the same correspondent—Lancaster, March 18, 1808:

"I must tell you that Governor Simon is very polite to me. I could not wish him to be more so and I confess I wonder at it for I am sometimes rather saucy in my language in the House, I have two or three times been called to order for lashing the Democratic party. What you tell me of the attempt in Kingston to injure me, I care not a rush for. I have done my duty faithfully and impartially and I will continue to do it without regard to *popularity*."

It is evident that being young and happy he got a good deal of fun out of the happenings in the Assembly, as well as felt the dignity and responsibility of the position. In the *Aurora,* Philadelphia, January 2, 1809, is a report of a bill that became utterly balled up by the number of motions heaped upon it; "A motion was then made by Mr. Miner" that they "resist the execution of the U. S. Court," to which it gravely appended in a note "This motion was made in derision." Perhaps a rather dangerous derision, since the State of Pennsylvania had recently been shaken by the question as to whether the judgments of the Supreme Court should be supreme.

Says the *Autobiography*: "The chief general matter of the first session was the Impeachment of Gov. McKean, commenced the last winter by those who had placed him in power, and who now, as was familiarly said, like Acteon, was pursued by his own dogs.

"In 1799 on being elected Governor, McKean chose to assume that all commissions, except those of judges, granted

by the executive, became null and void on the inauguration of a new Governor. He therefore issued a proclamation extending all such Commissions until it should be his pleasure to grant new ones. Thus, as he and his partisans said, making no removals, only filling vacancies constitutionally arising he made a clean sweep. I do not remember that, like Job's servants, one was left. Of course among the losers there was figuratively, 'weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.) All of the Federalists (for our party held the principal appointments under Governor Mifflin) came out full cry against [McKean]. A few years had passed by and lo, we were with few exceptions, his supporters, had aided to re-elect him, and now stood between him and impeachment by his former friends. The chief offence taken by Dr. Leib and his party seems to have arisen from the Governor refusing to remove judges on the address of the two Houses. The Constitution saying on such addresses 'the Governor *may* remove—not shall. It was charged on the Democratic party of that day, that nothing delighted them more than 'to run down a buck'—hunt a Judge out of office. To do them justice, be it said there were grounds for their hostility to the Bench and Bar. The great system of Legal Reform now so justly popular, then, and for several years advocated by the Democrats, was opposed by us Federalists under the lead of the Bench and Bar. * * * Governor McKean declared that he would let the addressors know that 'may' meant 'wont'—so the Judges kept their seats and the Governor was attacked. Resolutions to impeach were offered, but seizing the opportunity on the absence of one of their men, we called up the Resolution, and negatived it." Elsewhere he says: "By my casting vote I saved him from impeachment."

Having been instrumental in excluding small bills from circulation in Pennsylvania, by his first resolution, as has been seen, Mr. Miner proceeded to uphold, throughout his three terms of office, as later in Congress, many practical

questions of development and internal improvement—the North branch and other canals, post-roads, etc.

"Foreseeing the growth of the coal trade at a very early day Mr. Miner advocated the improvement of the descending navigation of the Susquehanna and Lehigh rivers, predicting the connection of their waters by a railroad long before such roads were generally known or thought of. In fact there was not then a railway in existence—save the tram-roads in and about the mines of Newcastle, England—and to those who understood this, how much like the merest vagaries of the imagination must Mr. Miner's confident hopes have seemed. And yet he lived to see them realized!" [Harvey's Lodge, No. 61, p. 432.]

Legislature convened December 6, 1808, and on the 8th he offered resolutions, in sympathy with the movement that was sweeping all over the country, accelerated by the embargo, proposing the encouragement of sheep-raising, and of wool manufacture. These resolutions proposed the exemption of all sheep from taxation, of ten sheep from attachment for debt; a bounty on full-blooded sheep; that any militia that would wear homespun should be entirely accoutred at public expense, etc.

In the course of his speech supporting his bill he says: "Patriotism conspires with interest to urge [us] to take some effectual measures upon this subject. The measures to be effectual must be liberal. It is notorious, Sir, that Great Britain has united with the enemy to restrict our Commerce. In consequence of their injustice our Government have thought it necessary to lay an embargo. Without now entering into the enquiry whether the measure was proper or not, it certainly is our duty as good citizens to submit to the inconveniences it produces—to obey the laws with all possible cheerfulness, and to relieve ourselves from the evils we suffer, as early and effectually as we can. And how is this to be done? By manufacturing those articles ourselves, of which we stand most in need, and which we

import from Europe. Seven-tenths of the woolen clothes we wear are the manufacture of England. Cannot we manufacture them for ourselves? Sir, our wives, our daughters, our sweethearts are industrious and patriotic enough to clothe us all in homespun if we will furnish them with the materials. How shall we do this? Improve your breed and number of sheep." He probably was clad in homespun at this time, for he wore it as an object lesson.

Of another bill of this session he says: "Another resolution introduced by me proposed the inquiry, whether any legislative measure could with propriety be adopted to promote vaccination for kine pox. The subject was referred to a committee, and with their consent I prepared and presented a report thereon." [Which was passed, printed and widely circulated, thus "bringing the matter in an official form before the people" and doing good educative work].

"I did not see clearly, on introducing my resolution, what steps of practical utility could be taken by the public authorities; but my main purpose was to bring the matter in an official form before the people; to make it a matter of discussion; to arouse a spirit of inquiry; to dissipate a prejudice; to diffuse information; and thus, through every part of the community, to extend vaccination for the kine-pox. My motives and efforts, I had the pleasure to know, were duly appreciated. Intelligent philanthropists in various parts of the state, in and out of the medical profession, and especially in Philadelphia, corresponded with me upon the subject; and among them I have particular pride in naming the late John Vaughan, one of the most unwearied of philanthropists that ever lived or died. To know would be happiness, to believe is a pleasure, that I was the means of saving one life; a single son to the hopes of his father; a single daughter in health and unimpaired beauty to the embraces of her Mother."

On January 7, 1809, a resolution was offered, proposing

that Pennsylvania's senators and representatives in Congress be instructed to use their influence to have the Constitution amended so that the several States might elect their senators in the same manner as they did their representatives. Taking the same position as a firm supporter of the Constitution as it was, that he later maintained in the House, Mr. Miner spoke against the proposal. "It must be evident," he said, "that the Constitution was so formed on purpose to prevent the individual States from constantly interfering with and troubling the Nation by applications for amendments."

Again re-elected, in 1812, one letter remains, announcing his arrival at Harrisburg, where the Assembly convened that year. "My old acquaintances seem glad to see me, and there appears nothing yet like passion or party feeling."

On the 9th of December the legislature was invited to a "bull-bait," and on the next day Mr. Miner wrote a horrified letter to his paper, *"The Gleaner,"* and also introduced a resolution, which was adopted almost unanimously, the other members being equally shocked. "Conceiving that every wise and humane Government ought to protect animals from cruelty; that the practice is disgraceful," etc. "Therefore, Resolved, That a committee be appointed to bring in a bill suppressing the practice of bull-baiting, and providing for the more effectual punishment of persons who shall be guilty of cruelty to animals."

The next, and last bill to need mention, is benignly entitled "An Act to Promote the Comfort of the Poor," in which he said: "The first aim of a wise Legislature should be to guard the weak from oppression, and so far to restrain the hand of power that it should not even in pursuit of its own rights of property, be enabled to trample on the rights of humanity. * * * Is it not an error that under the present laws, every article of property * * * earned by the industry of the wife, may be taken for the debt of the husband. Resolved, Therefore, That the following

articles should be secure to each family from execution or other legal process for debts hereafter to be contracted, to-wit: Two beds and the necessary bedding; household utensils not exceeding in value 15 dollars; one cow; the necessary tools of a tradesman, not exceeding in value 20 dollars; a spinning-wheel." The sufferings of the poor always bore heavily upon him, so this "Act" gave him more "pleasures of memory" than any other of his legislative career, the exclusion of small bills coming next.

In one of his letters is the characteristic exclamation: "Oh, how I wish I could make everyone happy;" on the margin of Pope's Universal Prayer he wrote opposite the stanza:

"Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me."

"I would rather have written this than any other verse in the English language," while the passage from the Bible most frequently on his lips was: "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Meanwhile, at home, in the intervals between legislative work, he was not only a busy printer and editor, but engaged in other laborious and responsible toils; contracting for the transportation of the mails between Wilkes-Barré and Northumberland, etc., and acting as assistant in taking the Luzerne county part of the census of 1810.

Returning with empty saddle bags from one such mail carrying tour he overtook a stranger, a surveyor, loaded heavily. "Let me relieve you of part of your load, friend. You are going to Wilkes-Barre, I suppose,—he said he was—and without more ado * * * he put into my saddle-bags, compasses, chains, and some few other things." Taking them 40 miles Mr. Miner delivered them

and thought no more about it, but years afterward, on his removal to Chester county, the man came to thank him. "His son was then Prothonotary or Recorder of the County of Chester—both of course thorough-going opponents of my Federal Principles—so that their good word, freely given, that, however, much of a Heretic in Politics, I was personally a clever fellow, was of very great service in establishing for me a good name."

As has been seen, at one time, on the suggestion of a friendly opponent in the village debating society, he had thought of becoming a lawyer, entered his name as a student, and read his Blackstone through twice, as well as Jones on Bailments, etc., but reluctantly gave up the idea, he said, because of the pressure of "this day our daily bread, given to faith but faith attended by work." Again, in the fever-autumn of 1804, in the valley, he showed the versatility of his usefulness by acting successfully as a volunteer nurse, in which capacity he was often summoned, in later years, especially in severe fever cases. In those days trained nurses were almost unknown; so that Mr. Miner's sagacious foresight was illustrated by his remark, in the *Autobiography*, that "when population becomes dense, a few persons, fitted by gentleness, watchfulness, and care, should be trained to the profession, they taking the lead, the neighbors assisting."

In 1807, on one of his trips to Philadelphia, he met a kindred spirit, an Irishman who, in the course of an interesting conversation, spoke of having been freely with the sick during a very severe run of spotted fever. "Were you not afraid of catching the disease?" "Oh, I was willing to take chances with my neighbors! There was goodness and philosophy in that. Son of St. Patrick I wish I knew your name, you have often been present to my thoughts."

In 1809 he had sold the *Federalist* to Sidney Tracy and Steuben Butler, but in Septemebr, 1810, resumed its conduct, Butler and Tracy retiring. The next year, according

to the fashion of frequent and sometimes confusing changes of newspaper names which has always prevailed in the history of American journalism, it became the *WilkesBarre Gleaner and Luzerne Advertiser,* the latter part of the title being afterwards dropped.

To the *Luzerne Federalist* for September 7, 1810, when still "printed by Tracy and Butler," Charles Miner contributed a little story which was destined to be copied from one end of the country to the other, to reappear in school reading-books down to this present year, 1913, and to furnish America, as has been said, with its most frequently used familiar quotation—"to have an axe to grind." The story—"Who'll Turn Grindstone?" afterwards became the first in the series entitled "Essays from the Desk of Poor Robert the Scribe," the title of which so closely resembled Franklin's "Poor Richard" that the famous quotation has sometimes been assigned to the elder philosopher. But Mr. Miner wrote to the Norwich Jubilee of 1859 that he got the idea of such a series from Samuel Trumbull, the son of the editor of the local newspaper in Norwich: "a young man of a good deal of reading, and of ready wit. He wrote several essays under the head of 'From the Desk of Beri Hesden;' the hint and name of the essays 'From the Desk of Poor Robert the Scribe' I am sure I owed to him."

As the famous tale was somewhat modified in its later issues, a verbatim reprint of its first appearance has literary and biographical value.

Who'll Turn Grindstone

When I was a little boy, Messrs. Printers, I remember one cold winter's morning, I was accosted by a smiling man, with an ax on his shoulder,—"My pretty boy," said he, "has your father a grindstone?" "Yes, sir," said I. "You are a fine little fellow," said he, "will you let me grind my ax on it?" Pleased with his compliment of "fine little fellow"

—"O, yes, sir,"—I answered, "it is down in the shop." "And will you my man," said he, patting me on the head, "get a little hot water?" How could I refuse? I ran and soon brought a kettle full. "How old are you, and what's your name," continued he without waiting for a reply. "I am sure you are one of the finest lads that I have ever seen, will you just turn a few minutes for me?" Tickled with the flattery like a little fool I went to work, and bitterly did I rue the day. It was a new ax—and I toiled and tugged, till I was almost tired to death. The school bell rung, and I could not get away,—my hands were blistered, and it was not half ground. At length, however, the ax was sharpened, and the man turned to me, with "Now, you little rascal, you've played the truant,—scud to school, or you'll rue it." Alas, thought I, it was hard enough to turn grindstone this cold day, but now to be called "little rascal" was too much. It sunk deep in my mind, and often have I thought of it since.

"When I see a Merchant, over polite to his customers, begging them to taste a little brandy, and throwing half his goods on the counter—thinks I, that man has an ax to grind.

"When I have seen a man of doubtful character, patting a girl on the cheek, praising her sparkling eye and ruby lip, and giving her a sly squeeze,—Beware my girl, tho't I, or you will find to your sorrow, that you have been turning grindstone for a villain.

"When I see a man flattering the people, making great professions of attachment to liberty, who is in private life a tyrant, Methinks, look out good people, that fellow would set you to turning grindstone.

"When I see a man, holding a fat office, sounding 'the horn on the borders,' to call the people to support the man, on whom he depends for his office, Well thinks I, no wonder the man is zealous in the cause, he evidently has an ax to grind.

"When I see a Governor, foisted into the chair of state,

without a single qualification to render him either respectable or useful,—Alas! methinks, deluded people, you are doomed for a season to turn grindstone for a booby.

"When I see a foreigner expelled from his own country, and turning patriot in this—setting up a PRESS, and making a great ado about OUR liberties, I am very apt to think, —tho' that man's ax has been dulled in his own country, he evidently intends to sharpen it in this."

In the reissue in book form the last three paragraphs were replaced by the following:

"When I see a man hoisted in office by party spirit—without a single qualification to render him either respectable or useful—Alas! methinks, deluded people, *you are doomed for a season to turn grindstone for a booby.*"

This was the only "Poor Robert" essay to appear in the *Federalist;* but when, after a few months cessation, the paper reappeared as the *Gleaner* the series was resumed, not in consecutive issues. None of the later essays attained the currency and fame of the first; but, as Captain Abraham Bradley, father of the then first assistant postmaster general, wrote from Washington in 1815 to Jesse Fell: "The editor of the *Gleaner* has acquired the highest reputation among all ranks of people and served his country and the cause he has espoused, at least equal to any editor in the United States. His productions are copied into most of the papers from Maine to Ohio, and some of those in the south. Even the editor of the *National Intelligencer* cannot withhold, with all his Democratic austerity, from republishing some pieces which have no acrimony against his beloved system of democracy. Everyone is charmed."

August 6, 1813, appeared the following prospectus of the complete series in book form: "Proposals, at the *Gleaner* office, are now made, to publish the '*Essays From the Desk of Poor Robert the Scribe,*' containing lessons in Manners, Morals, and Domestic Economy." Subscription papers were requested by October 1, and were also received at the office

of the *Literary Visitor,* a creditable little monthly miscellany issued in Wilkes-Barre by Steuben Butler. The volume, however, did not appear until July, 1815, when it was issued from Asher Miner's office in Doylestown. Thirty-two essays and a piece of verse comprised its contents, in a sixteen mo. of 120 pages.

Mr. Miner himself hardly seemed to realize the widespread vogue of his famous saying, though he once wrote of the series: "They made me many friends; among the rest the pioneer of American literature [Joseph Dennie] complimented me by a friendly note and a volume of his *Port Folio.*"

I once began to keep note of the times I found the phrase in current print, but soon gave up the attempt as indefinitely extensive. Three or four illustrations are as good as a hundred: "The letter indicates that the writer had an ax to grind" (*"Great Cases of Detective Burns,"* by Dana Gatlin, *McClure's Magazine,* April, 1911); "I've no ax to grind for myself" (*"The Street Called Straight," Harper's Magazine,* June, 1912); "To put the power of directing the finances of the American people into the hands of politicians with 'axes to grind' would be an irreparable blunder" (*Boston Daily Advertiser,* June 26, 1913); and so on constantly. In Robert Grant's novel, "The Chippendales," the phrase is used in four separate places; I have seen it pasted over the whole side of the delivery wagon of a New York daily newspaper in an exciting city election; and I have heard it in a London theater in a translation of a play from the French.

"If we had to turn our own grindstones we wouldn't have so many axes to grind." (*Cincinnati Enquirer,* October, 1914.)

"I fear it is that kind of axe that people bring not to use but to grind." (G. K. Chesterton, *Illustrated London News,* November 14, 1914.)

"Publishers, critics, and reviewers who have axes to grind." (*Nation,* March 4, 1915.)

Everyone who has studied the newspapers of Washington's, John Adams', and Jefferson's time knows that the asperities of political debate were such as to make the journalistic exchanges of the Taft-Wilson-Roosevelt campaign of 1912 seem comparatively gentle. Here is an example: "C——s M——r, answer to these, and then blush for the blackness of your designs, the corruption of your heart, the malignity of your soul." This was from the *Luzerne Democrat* of November 15, 1811, the local organ of the rival party, which had, four months before, cordially remarked (the "wretch" being the same innocent Mr. Miner): "The wretch who could deliberately call a democracy a tyranny, merits the curses of a free people, and is justly entitled to the epithet of villian."

Mr. Miner was able to retort in kind: one of his political opponents, he characterized on July 24, 1812, as "a nuisance that disgraces the county;" and "without character to lose." A more general attack, which reads strangely as coming from so temperate a man, was this [October 8, 1913]: "He that is in favor of burdening the mouth of labour with a tax on whiskey so enormous as to be more than double what it was in Adams' time, why let him vote for Democracy." The most ardent tariff-reformer of our day, or the most earnest vote-getter, would hardly venture to make such an appeal; but it must be remembered that liquor was then considered a food, to be dispensed, not dispensed with.

The *Gleaner's* attitude during the war of 1812 was that of the Federalist press generally: the war was a mistake, and badly managed after it was begun; but, once started, had to be carried through. Its conduct, however, was a legitimate subject for criticism: "How fatal have been our errors! How poor, weak, and miserable our policy!" [October 2, 1812.]

In his last number for 1813 and the following issue Mr. Miner wrote favoring "the opening of a communication

from the Susquehanna to Philadelphia, by a road or *railway* from Wilkes-Barre to the Lehigh, thence by that river to the Delaware, and thence to Philadelphia." * * * "Our public improvements must grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength. * * * I appeal to the judicious men who have witnessed the failure of our grandest plans, if they have not miscarried because they were disproportionate to the necessity and ability of the country. * * * I hope our grand-children may live to see a complete rail-way from this place to the Lehigh, and a canal from thence to Philadelphia."

This was certainly a very early prophecy; and it is a curious fact that while seven railroads now enter Wilkes-Barre, two of them circuitously rising over the mountain by the customary locomotive haul, thousands of tons a year are still drawn to the heights above the Lehigh by an inclined plane such as Mr. Miner must have had in his mind.

He was not the pioneer in coal-development in the Wyoming valley, but he materially promoted it by his articles in the *Gleaner,* in 1813-1814, and otherwise. The story of his introducing Mauch Chunk coal into Philadelphia has been often told, by himself and others; perhaps the best account of the early enterprise is given in a letter he wrote to Samuel J. Packer,* twenty years after, in which he shows that he and Jacob Cist were the first to make practicable the use of anthracite in Philadelphia:

WILKES-BARRE, Nov. 17, 1833.

Dear Sir: "Your favor of the 7th instant was duly received: I avail myself of the first moment of leisure to give you 'some account of the discovery of the Mauch Chunk coal, and the measures devised, at an early day, to bring it to market.'

"A hunter first discovered the black earth that covers

*Mr. Packer was chairman of the committee of the Pennsylvania Senate on the coal trade, and had asked for his expert knowledge. His letter was quoted entire in the report read in the Senate, March 4, 1834, and printed at Harrisburg, 1834.

the coal, at the old mine at Mauch Chunk, and reported the extraordinary appearance to J. Weiss, Esq., an intelligent gentleman who resided at Lehighton, within ten or twelve miles of the spot. An examination was immediately made, and anthracite coal found within a few feet of the surface. The land, being extremely rough and barren, had not been appropriated. The land was taken up by Mr. Weiss, and a company formed, principally of public-spirited citizens of Philadelphia; the mine was opened, and some small parcels taken to the city; but the difficulty of kindling the coal and the facility of obtaining that from Liverpool and Virginia prevented its introduction into use, and with a hundred other speculations of the day it slept, was forgotten by the public, and scarcely remembered by the owners of stock.

"After twenty years' repose the subject was awakened by the war of 1812. Jesse Fell, Associate Judge, one of the most estimable citizens of Wyoming, after various experiments, had shown the practicability of burning anthracite coal in grates, and the article had been in extensive use in Wilkes-Barre and the neighboring towns for several years previous to the commencement of hostilities; and its value, therefore, was known and properly appreciated. Commerce being suspended with England, and the coasting trade interrupted by British cruisers, so that foreign or Virginia coal could not be procured, fuel, and especially coal for manufacturing purposes, rose in Philadelphia to very high prices. Jacob Cist, of Wilkes-Barre, my intimate and much lamented friend, had derived from his father a few shares of stock in the old Lehigh Coal Company; and in conversation at his house, one evening, it was resolved to make an examination of the mines at Mauch Chunk and the Lehigh river, to satisfy ourselves whether it would be prudent and practicable to convey coal from thence to Philadelphia. Mr. Robinson, a mutual friend, active as a man of business, united with us in the enterprise. In the latter part of 1813

we visited Mauch Chunk, examined the mines, and made all the inquiries suggested by prudence respecting the navigation of the river Lehigh; and made up our minds to hazard the experiment if a sufficiently liberal arrangement could be made with the company. Our propositions were met with the utmost promptitude and liberality by Godfrey Hagar, the president, Mr. Wampole, secretary, and the other members. A lease was obtained, giving us liberty for ten years to take what coal we pleased, and to use what lumber we could find and might need, on their tract of 10,000 acres of land, the only consideration exacted being that we should work the mines, and every year take to the city a small quantity of coal—the coal to remain our own. The extremely favorable terms of the lease, to us, will show how low the property was then estimated, how difficult a matter it was deemed to bring the coal to market, and how great were the obstacles to bringing it into general use.

"During the winter of 1813-14 Mr. Robinson commenced opening the mines, both at Rover Run and on the mountain; but other more inviting objects presenting, he sold his right to William Hillhouse, of New Haven, Connecticut, in the spring of the latter year. Mr. Cist then managed his own part of the concern; Mr. Hillhouse and myself entered (June 2, 1814) into business together, the management of it to be left principally with me.

"The situation of Mauch Chunk, in the midst of barren mountains and a sparse population, rendered it necessary to obtain provisions, teams, miners, ark-builders, and other laborers from a distance. I made immediate arrangements to enter upon business, and on the 8th June arrived at Lausanne with my hands. * * * On Tuesday, the 9th of August, I being absent and there being a fresh in the river, Mr. Cist started off my first ark, sixty-five feet long—fourteen feet wide, with twenty-four tons of coal. * * * The stream wild, full of rocks, the channel crooked, in less than eighty rods from the place of starting the ark struck

on a ledge and broke in her bows. The lads stripped themselves nearly naked, to stop the leak with their clothes. * * * At dusk they were at Easton, fifty miles. On Wednesday they sailed from Easton, * * * and at night arrived at Black's Eddy. Thursday, 11th, went six miles below Trenton to White House; * * * Friday, 12th, arrived at Burlington; 13th, to Ten Mile Point; Sunday, 14th, arrived in the city, at 8 a. m. Monday unloaded and delivered the coal. * * *

Expenses on the voyage and returning....	$ 28.27
Wages, including three pilots	47.50
	$ 75.77
Ark cost us	130.00
24 tons of coal, raising from mine	24.00
Hauling 9 miles to landing*.....	96.00
Loading into ark	5.00
	$330.77

"So that, in the first experiment, the coal cost us about 14 dollars a ton in the city.

"I have been somewhat minute in giving you the details because this ark was the pioneer, and led off the coal trade, now so extensive and important, in Pennsylvania. This effort of ours was the acorn from which the mighty oak of the present Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company has grown.

"But while we pushed forward our labors at the mine, hauling coal and building arks, we had the greater difficulty to overcome of inducing the public to use the coal when brought to their doors, much as it was needed. We published handbills in English and German, stating the mode

*"The fact may not be uninteresting that we were obliged to pay $4.00, and for much of the coal hauled $4.50 a ton, over an exceedingly rough road, where now [1833] by railway, it is transported for twenty-five cents a ton. Such are the triumphs of human industry and art; such is the difference between the first experimental steps of a great enterprise and the work effected by capital and skill."

of burning the coal, either in grates, smiths' fires or stoves. Numerous certificates were obtained and printed from blacksmiths and others who had successfully used the coal. Mr. Cist found a model of a new coal stove and got a number cast.* Together, we went to a number of houses in the city and prevailed on the masters to allow us to kindle fires of anthracite in their grates, erected to burn Liverpool coal. We attended at Blacksmiths' shops and prevailed on some to alter the Iron so that they could burn the anthracite coal, and often were obliged to treat the journeymen, who were some of them much averse to the trouble of learning to use a new sort of fuel. Great as were our united exertions (and Mr. Cist, if they were meritorious, deserves the most commendation), necessity accomplished more than our labor. Charcoal advanced in price, and was difficult to be got. Manufacturers were forced to try the experiment, and everyday's use convinced them, and those also who witnessed their fires, of the great value of anthracite coal. Josiah White, then engaged in some manufacture of iron, it was understood, with characteristic enterprise and spirit brought the article into successful use in his works, from purchases made of our agent, and learned its incomparable value.

"We sent down a considerable number of arks, three out of every four of which stove and sunk on the way; the loss, however, though heavy, was lessened by the sale, at a moderate price of the cargoes, as they lay along the shores or in the bed of the Lehigh, to the smiths of Allentown, Bethlehem, and the neighborhood, who drew them away when the water became low. We were just learning that our arks were far too large, and the loads too heavy for the stream, and were making preparations to build coal boats

*Mrs. Thomas used to tell a story that amused her father, of a man trying to make the hard coal burn. He poked till he was tired, slammed the stove door, saying: "Well, go out then," went away, and was astonished on returning later to find a clear red hot fire!

to carry about ten tons each, that would be connected together when they arrived at Easton. Much had been taught us, but at a heavy cost, by the experiments of 1814 and '15. Peace came, and found us in the midst of our enterprise; the Philadelphia harbor was opened; Liverpool and Richmond coal came in abundant supplies; and anthracite fell to a price far below the cost of shipment. I need hardly add, the business was abandoned, leaving several hundred tons of coal on the bank at the mine, and the most costly part of the work done to take out some thousands of tons more. Our losses were met with the spirit of men of youth and enterprise; we turned our attention to other branches of industry. * * *

"As one of the pioneers in the great work of introducing the use of anthracite coal into our cities and upon our seaboard, I cannot but look with great pride and pleasure upon the success which has followed, and grown upon, our humble exertions—a success, I need hardly say, infinitely beyond the utmost stretch of our imaginations."

His imagination had certainly been prophetic, and so it continued to be. For convenience sake a few later anticipations and verifications may be given here. In 1830 he wrote an extended article for the *Anthracite Register*, Philadelphia, estimating the selling price of coal lands in the Wyoming valley, at that time, at ten to twenty dollars an acre, but declaring that while previously there had never been taken to market, from all the mines in Pennsylvania, more than about 150,000 tons in any one year, the demand must greatly increase. A prominent point for business would be "Wilkes-Barre, the county town, a borough of more than 1,000 inhabitants, and now having eleven dry-goods stores. The situation is eligible, the town-plot large and handsomely laid out; and it must be the centre of an extensive trade and the site of a large business." Twenty-four years later, March 22, 1854, he was writing to his friend, Hendrick B. Wright of Plymouth (Democratic

congressman): "Wonderful excitement prevails here in coal speculations. Several have sold at 200 dollars an acre, thinking it a great sum—intrinsically worth $2,000 an acre. Bowkley, just returned from England, assures us of repeated sales there, to the amount of some millions, at 1000 pounds sterling an acre." The value of anthracite coal lands has for a long time [1915] been double his $2000 mark. At one time he foretold that there would be a Wyoming output (doubtless using the word "Wyoming" in a general sense) of 20,000,000 tons a year by 1880. In 1882 the shipment from the Wyoming region alone was 14,000,000 tons, and in 1880, from all the anthracite region, 25,700,000. In 1912 the Wyoming output was 37,000,000, and the total 73,700,00.

Nor was his eye less keenly fixed upon the economic and governmental phases of the anthracite problems of the far future. In the 1830 article already quoted he prophesied the monopolizing of anthracite coal by the "interests," which has been fulfilled absolutely: "Should capitalists step in and monopolize coal lands, a thing not difficult to be done, in a great degree, as is generally imagined, they would then realize from the public large profits; but it would be a subject for regret."

In 1855 he anticipated the great question of nationalization of mines, in Alaska or elsewhere, which was outlined by executive action by President Roosevelt in 1906, and is stirring up all the four political parties in 1913. Said Mr. Miner in a second letter to Hendrick B. Wright (November 29, 1855):

"Our steam navy is growing, and must greatly increase. Bituminous coal may partly answer; anthracite better, and where smoke is to be avoided, indispensable, indispensable. Companies are fast monopolizing the comparatively limited anthracite coal-fields, and presently can combine, and will, to give law to the market, and the government be at their mercy, as they are at the railroads' for the transportation

of the mails. The possession of 2000 or 3000 acres of coal-land here, having an opening to the Chesapeake, and, more important, to the lake frontier, where the tug of war must be made, would give the government immense advantage and security. They could buy in open market when the price ruled fair. If an attempt was made at monopoly or extortion, they could resort to their own. The very fact of their owning it would prevent the attempt. The argument, advantages, probable necessities, certain conveniences, and utility, might be followed out,—every advance with augmented power of demonstration. * * * The cost of a single steamship of war would *now* purchase 2000 acres in the heart of the Wyoming valley."

But we must return to our chronological story of Mr. Miner's life, and to his newspaper career in 1813. Becoming sole editor of the *Gleaner,* he found time to start another series of essays, in his familiar manner, this time entitled "The Cogitations of My Uncle John." It never attained the success of its predecessor, but some of the papers were copied, as before, by distant journals. The publication of the *Gleaner* was interrupted, between March 10 and April 16, 1813, by a serious fire; in the same year Mr. Miner built a house, at the corner of Union and Franklin streets, which served not only for his family but for the newspaper, until its sale in 1816. The building was torn down as late as 1887.

Meanwhile, as usual, he continued to find spare time for another employment, for in 1815, he ran a "land-office," for the sale of real estate. This business was disposed of after a nine months' trial.

Somewhat less practical, but far more lasting, was the publication of his famous ballad of *"James Bird,"* in 1814. Mr. Miner was no poet, but an occasional versifier. In *"James Bird"* he found a thrilling subject of deep human interest, and the ballad has never gone out of the public mind.

James Bird, a boy from Exeter, just across the river from Wilkes-Barre, was a volunteer in the war of 1812; fought bravely in the *Lawrence,* in Commodore Perry's battle of Lake Erie; was severely wounded, but refused to leave the deck; and was promoted for gallantry to be orderly sergeant of marines. When Perry was ordered to the seaboard, Bird deserted his post, not his country, in order to rejoin his loved commander, and was arrested at Pittsburg, court-martialled, refused time to appeal to Perry, convicted, and shot. Here is his story, as told by Mr. Miner, and wept over by generations of readers:

THE BALLAD OF JAMES BIRD.

Sons of freedom, listen to me,
And ye daughters, too give ear,
You a sad and mournful story
As was ever told, shall hear.

Hull, you know, his troops surrendered,
And defenceless left the west;
Then our forces quick assembled,
The invaders to resist.

Amongst the troops that marched to war,
Were the Kingston volunteers;
Captain Thomas them commanded,
To protect our west frontiers.

Tender were the scenes of parting,
Mothers wrung their hands and cried,
Maidens wept their swains in secret,
Fathers strove their tears to hide.

There is one among the number,
Tall and graceful is his mien,
Firm his step, his look undaunted,
Scarce a nobler youth was seen.

One sweet kiss he snatched from Mary,
Craved his mother's prayer, and more,
Pressed his father's hand, and left them
For Lake Erie's distant shore.

Mary tried to say "Farewell, James,"
Waved her hand, but nothing spoke,
"Good-bye, Bird, may Heaven preserve you,"
From the rest at parting broke.

Soon they came where noble Perry
Had assembled all his fleet;
Then the gallant Bird enlisted,
Hoping soon the foe to meet.

Where is Bird? The battle rages;
Is he in the strife or no?
Now the cannon roars tremendous;
Dare he meet the hostile foe?

Aye! behold him! see him, Perry!
In the selfsame ship they fight;
Though his messmates fall around him
Nothing can his soul affright.

But behold! a ball has struck him;
See the crimson current flow;
"Leave the deck!" exclaimed brave Perry;
"No!" cried Bird, "I will not go."

"Here on deck I took my station,
Here will Bird his cutlass ply;
I'll stand by you, gallant captain,
Till we conquer or we die."

Still he fought, though faint and bleeding,
Till our stars and stripes waved o'er us,
Victory having crowned our efforts,
All triumphant o'er our foes.

And did Bird receive a pension?
Was he to his friends restored?
No; nor never to his bosom
Clasped the maid his heart adored.

But there came most dismal tidings
From Lake Erie's distant shore;
Better far if Bird had perished
Midst the battle's awful roar.

"Dearest parents," said the letter,
This will bring sad news to you;
Do not mourn your first beloved,
Though this brings his last adieu.

"I must suffer for deserting
From the brig *Niagara;*
Read this letter, brothers, sisters,
'Tis the last you'll hear from me."

Sad and gloomy was the morning
Bird was ordered out to die;
Where's the breast not dead to pity
But for him would heave a sigh?

Lo! he fought so brave at Erie,
Freely bled and nobly dared;
Let his courage plead for mercy,
Let his precious life be spared.

See him march and bear his fetters;
Hark! they clank upon the ear;
But his step is firm and manly,
For his heart ne'er harbored fear.

See him kneel upon his coffin,
Sure his death can do no good;
Spare him! spare! O God, they shoot him!
Oh! his bosom streams with blood.

Farewell, Bird; farewell forever;
Friends and home he'll see no more;
But his mangled corpse lies buried
On Lake Erie's distant shore.

As this poem and its facts are continually being asked for in the press it has been thought best to add Mr. Miner's own account as given in *The Gleaner,* April 28, 1815:

"At the commencement of the late war, a company of men from Kingston, in this county, under the command of Captain Thomas, volunteered their services to the government. When the fatal disaster befell our army under Gen. Hull of Detroit, and large reinforcements were wanted, the Kingston Volunteers were called upon to perform their tour of duty. They marched with alacrity, and remained under the command of General Harrison, until the reduction of Upper Canada rendered it prudent to dispense with their further services.

"Among the Volunteers, was a young man by the name of James Bird, aged about twenty years; he was born in Exeter, where his parents now reside. Bird enlisted in the Marines while at Erie, and in the memorable engagement of September 10th served on board the Lawrence, under the immediate command of Commodore Perry."

The following notice of his conduct in the engagement was derived from Mr. Carkhuff, one of the Volunteers, and appears in the *Gleaner* of Nov. 26, 1813:—

" 'James Bird, son of Mr. J. Bird, of Exeter, was on board the *Lawrence,* with the gallant Perry, on the glorious tenth of September. The battle raged—many a poor fellow fell around him— Bird did his duty like a hero. Towards the close of the engagement, a cannister shot struck him on the shoulder as he was stooping to his gun. He was instantly covered with blood, and his officer ordered him below. He ventured to disobey, preferring to do duty while he had life, to abandoning his post. But the blood flowed

so fast that another order was issued to go below. He ran down—got a hasty bandage on the wound, came again on deck, and although his left arm was useless, yet he handed cartridges, and performed the utmost service in his power with his right, until the stars and stripes waved gloriously, victorious over the foe.'

"The following extract of a letter from Bird, will speak for itself, and show the vicissitudes of fortune, attending a state of war. I called on his parents for the letter. His father was not at home,—The anguish and the tears of his mother made me almost regret that I had mentioned the painful subject. If you, reader, had been there, I think you would have agreed with me, that the public ought to reap great and certain benefits from a war that creates so many causes of private grief,—I do not mean to complain of any officer, or of any man, but I could not help thinking that the bravery and good conduct of Bird in the battle, might have plead for his pardon. Hull gave up a whole army, yet he was pardoned. Brack murdered poor Dixon, but Brack was not sentenced to die. Bird had performed more services than either, and his crime was much less injurious or malignant, but there was no pardon for him. It was the fortune of war. Indeed war is a cruel monster, at least I thought so when I reflected on the death of the brave Bird, and saw his mother's tears. But I detain you from the letter:—

'Dear Parents,

'I take my pen in hand to write a few words to you which will bring bad news; but do not lament, nor make sad moans for the loss of your first beloved and dearest son James.

'Dear Parents, brothers and sister, relations and friends, I do write to you a most sad and dismal letter, such as never before came from any your beloved children. I have often sat down and wrote a few lines to you with pleasure; but I am sorry at present to let you know my

sad and deplorable situation. I am the most miserable and desolate child of the family,— Dear Parents, let my brothers and sisters read this letter, for it is the last they can ever receive from my hand, for by the laws of our country I am doomed and sentenced to death, for deserting from the marines at Lake Erie, and am now confined on board the United States brig Niagara.

'And O! loving Parents, my time is but short here on earth. I have but a few moments to make my peace with my maker,—I leave you only for a short time here on earth, I leave you only for a short time here in this most troublesome world; but I hope that by constant prayer, we shall meet in the world above, to part no more.'

[The remaining part of the letter consists of urgent and pressing requests to his friends to prepare for their end, and in expressions of a lively hope of salvation for himself.]

'I remain your most affectionate and beloved son until death; so Amen, This from me, JAMES BIRD.'

'November the 9th, 1814.'

"Soon after the receipt of this letter, there came another from an officer on board the squadron stating the execution of Bird, on the next day. So perished as brave a soldier as belonged to the army."

A better illustration of the difficulty of unquestionable historical accuracy, as well as of the power of a ballad, could hardly be found than is given by this wooden piece of verse. One turns hither and yon and finds details conflicting in suggestion if not in statement. With regard to the often used term "The Kingston Volunteers" be it said, in his letter to Governor Snyder, printed in the *Pennsylvania Archives,* 2nd series, Vol. 12, p. 545, Captain Samuel Thomas offers his command under the name of "Luzerne Volunteer Matross", but the letter is dated "Kingston, June 10, 1812", Kingston, Luzerne county, Penn'a., evidently being headquarters.

In the official record in the *State Papers, Naval Affairs,* Bird appears in the list of those severely wounded on the *Lawrence,* as "James Bird, Marine," and in the list of those receiving a share of "the distribution of prize money on Lake Erie" as "James Burd, Private", whose share was $214.89, paid on January 10, 1815, to the "Attorney of his father." In fact, he was first private and then marine, but in both these cases he was marine.

Perry, in his letter to the Secretary of the Navy, September 13, 1813, reports "those officers and men who were immediately under my observation who evinced the greatest gallantry", but among the names does not mention Bird, or, indeed, any other "man". A very similar story of several nameless wounded men, and of a sick man who refused to stay below, is told by Dr. Usher Parsons, the surgeon on the *Lawrence,* who, in various commemorative addresses, does not speak of Bird, though one may have been he.

There is a tradition stated in the text, that may have come to Mr. Miner from Bird's family, that he left his post on the *Niagara,* in the hope of rejoining Perry, and so did not in intention desert his country; and another that Perry sent a reprieve, of which later.

Again, in a paper entitled "*The Battle of Lake Erie in Ballad and History,* by Charles B. Galbreath, published in the *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly,* in 1911, a number of pages are devoted to Bird's history: "presented in paraphrase from authentic sources." Here it is stated that Bird joined the marines, on the suggestion of an officer, to escape punishment for having allowed stores in his keeping to disappear; that after desertion he was recognized in Butler, Pennsylvania, and reported, though it is not said he was arrested there; that "efforts were made to have Bird's sentence commuted to imprisonment, because of his gallantry in the battle of Lake Erie, but without success. The President refused to extend clemency to Bird on the ground that 'having deserted from his post while in charge of a

guard, in time of war, he must therefore suffer as an example to others.'" * * * He with two others "were executed on board the *Niagara* in the road stead at Erie in October, 1814, and were buried in the 'sand beach.'"

The ballad itself is quoted by Mr. Galbreath with only some natural verbal changes, and the omission of one stanza. The writer, who often heard it sung "to an old church tune", tenderly describes the singer and the effect of the ballad: "Those who hear with impatience three or four stanzas of a song in these days, can hardly believe with what tense interest this old ballad was heard to the last word. Tears often came into the eyes of the young listeners. * * * This event [the battle] was known along the borders of the lake, not alone through the valiant deeds of Perry, and the far reaching results of his achievement, but even more through the tragic fate of one who fought beside him under the splintered masts on the slippery deck of the *Lawrence*.

"Judged by modern standards, our ancestors of seventy-five years ago enjoyed only primitive advantages. * * * Many of them knew of the Battle of Lake Erie only through the ballad of James Bird. Corn huskings, apple cuttings, log rollings, and even quilting bees of the long ago not unfrequently closed with the rendition of the quaint, pathetic song, written by a bard *unlearned and unknown,* but not without the gift to tell his story well. *Who wrote it is not known.* [The italics are mine.] As a local historian observes, the author was apparently familiar with the true story of Bird's home, and he adds: 'That there was wide spread sympathy felt for Bird chiefly because of his service on the fleet, there can be no doubt. The tenacity with which the popularity of the ballad endured is proof of this. It is now rare; rare enough to excuse its appearance as part of the history of the region on which it was so long a popular feature of nearly every entertainment or public gathering.'"

On another page Mr. Galbreath says: "Ten years ago he who had sung the old song was a little disappointed to read

a paragraph in a paper to the effect that James Bird was a myth and the old ballad was fiction with no basis of reality."

An element of romance is added by "K. T. B.", a correspondent of the Philadelphia *Press,* January 13, 1814, who, telling the familiar story of Bird's refusal to go below, adds: "For his bravery he was honored and excited the envy of a young lieutenant. * * * The war was over, Perry was away, and Bird and a young man named Rankin left, it was supposed, to join Jackson at New Orleans. They were brought back and condemned to be shot. A reprieve was sent, two men riding on horseback were seen in the distance, waving it, but they were too late. That night the lieutenant ordered a guard put in his tent to keep away Bird's ghost. The second night he committed suicide."

Thus, a hundred years after it was written we can see the *Ballad of James Bird* going through the process of becoming a true folk-ballad: "facts" contradict each other; tradition developes; the hero becomes a myth; jealousy and the supernatural are added, and the writer is lost in the mists of Time. It seems almost a pity to have done this much in the interest of the plain light of truth.

Mr. Miner's first period of residence in the Wyoming Valley was now over, for in 1816 he sold the *Gleaner* to Isaac A. Chapman, and went in June to Philadelphia as editor and part owner (with Thomas T. Stiles) of the *True American,* a daily. To his wife, whom, in the uncertainties of his new work, he left behind, he wrote: "I am obliged to be proper busy; the editor of a daily paper has little time to himself." In the *True American,* according to his custom, he started a series of moralizing essays, this time entitled "Lectures of Father Paul." The Philadelphia experiment was not a long-lasting one, though in addition to the *True American* work, he was for a time assistant editor of a *Political and Commercial Register.* The next year, unable to stand the city life, he was back with his family in Wilkes-Barré, and

though soon offered the assistant editorship of the well-known *United States Gazette,* in what he used to call the "metropolis," he declined it; in July, 1817, buying the *Chester and Delaware Federalist,* at West Chester, Pennsylvania, to which place he removed his family, and which was to be his home for fifteen years.

Undeterred by the national defeat of his dearly-loved political party, for four presidential terms, he hoisted his banner as of yore, and in the initial number of his new sheet printed a salutatory which left no doubt as to his position: "My principles, although somewhat old-fashioned, and not the most popular, I am proud to avow. I am a Federalist!"

The early printers, from the days of Gutenberg to those of the Franklins, were accustomed to wander from place to place in search of business; so that the migrations of Charles and Asher Miner, sometimes types and all, were not exceptional. The frequent changes of name to which they subjected their various papers were also, as has been said, in accordance with the fashion of the time, which, indeed, continued to the period of the journalistic consolidations of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Soon, the *Chester and Delaware Federalist* became the *Village Record,* under which title it was for years one of the best-known provincial weeklies in the country. Thurlow Weed, the veteran editor and influential New York politician, wrote in the *New York Observer* in 1882: *"The Village Record,* a weekly paper published and edited fifty years ago by Charles Miner, was my model newspaper. The articles entitled 'From the Desk of Poor Robert the Scribe' were generally copied and read with interest and instruction by professional men, mechanics, farmers, etc., etc., each and all finding much to improve their minds, to regulate their conduct, to soothe their sorrows, to soften their manners and to brighten their lives."

That Mr. Weed, writing so long afterward, should have

put the *Poor Robert* articles into the *Village Record* was not an unnatural slip. Mr. Miner's familiar essays, soon started according to his usual plan were this time called the "John Harwood" papers. In other ways, too, the active printer sought to raise the intellectual and moral tone of the community, for in one of his issues he inserted a notice of books to lend.

In all matters of new inventions or interesting discoveries Mr. Miner was always a pioneer; thus he was the first in his neighborhood to get and use sulphur matches. His Franklinian or Jeffersonian interest in all things useful, new or old, is taken for granted in the following letter from Nicholas Biddle, the famous financier of the United States Bank:

"ANDALUSIA, APRIL 25, 1822.

"I am going to take a liberty for which I am sure I shall find an apology in your desire to diffuse any valuable information.

"A gentleman in Boston has requested me to obtain the best information I can procure with regard to the machine for mowing invented by one of our citizens in Chester or Delaware county, about which he has heard very extraordinary accounts. The machine is, I presume, that of Mr. Bailey; of this I know nothing except from report; but Dr. Meade tells me that he has seen a certificate in its favor signed by a number of gentlemen, of whom you were one. I cannot therefore attain my object better than by asking you to have the goodness to let me know your opinion of it in detail. I should wish to understand exactly what is the size and structure of the machine; its mode of operation; whether it really overcomes the great obstacle in all instruments hitherto used for that purpose; the difficulty of laying the swath down so as not to choke the machine; the price; the character and occupation of the inventor; and how the machine could be obtained. The object is certainly one of great interest, and I should feel a pride, which I

know you would share, if our state could present to the world an improvement which the genius of Europe has so long sought in vain.*

"Very respect'y and truly yrs.

"NICHOLAS BIDDLE."

Mr. Miner had not been in Chester county long before he was asked to enter active political life, for which his vigorous editorials had shown his fitness; and in 1820 he was the Federalist candidate for Congress in the Chester and Montgomery district. The candidacy was unsuccessful, for the rise of the Federalist-National-Republican tide was to be postponed for four years; but he made a good showing. By this time, though not now in public life, he had become the friend and sometimes the valued confidant of men of the largest national prominence. Thus Chief Justice Marshall wrote him from Richmond, July 11, 1821:

"I thank you very sincerely for your politeness and attention in forwarding to me the *Village Record* of the 11th, containing the proceedings of the Washington Association, in conjunction with the Washington guards, in West Chester on the 4th of July, which I received this morning.

"Feeling deeply, as every American must, the great event commemorated on that day, throughout our nation; and considering the opinions expressed on it, as indicating, in no inconsiderable degree the public feeling, I take an interest in what is said on that great anniversary, and was much gratified on reading your toast, and the truly American sentiments with which it was so handsomely introduced. I was the more gratified with those sentiments because the time is arrived, I think, when the good and the wise are urged by the strongest motives of genuine patriotism, to assuage by lenient application those asperities and jealousies between the states which have been, I believe, excited with-

*Up to that year, 1822, there had been no practical reaper or mower in Great Britain or the United States, the first successful machines being Bell's, in Scotland, 1826, and Hussey's, in Ohio, in 1833.

out sufficient cause, and which too many are not unwilling still farther to irritate;—asperities and jealousies which may lead to consequences all must deplore, when the time for preventing them shall have passed away.

"I have seen no paper containing the proceedings of the 4th of July with which I have been so highly pleased as with those of the *Village Record* of the 11th. Accept my thanks for it, and believe me to be with great respect

"Your obed' Serv't

"J. MARSHALL."

James Buchanan, too,—then a Federalist,—asked his assistance in following that "middle course" which was to characterize the future president to the end of his days:

"WASHINGTON, 1st March, 1823.

"By this mail I take the liberty of sending you the *National Intelligencer* containing the remarks which I made on the subject of the tariff. You will perceive that I have pursued a middle course, which I believe to be the best policy of the country generally and peculiarly adapted to the middle states. As this subject will certainly be before Congress next winter, and as I believe there can no doubt but that some changes will be made in the tariff, I wish the public in our district to become acquainted with it and express their opinion. With this view I would request that when you can do it without crowding out more important matter, you will either publish the whole or such parts of my remarks as will call the attention of the people to the most important measure which in all human probability will be before the next Congress. I should be pleased to know your individual opinions of this and other subjects about which I hope ere long to have an opportunity of conversing with you.

"From your friend,

"JAMES BUCHANAN."

By 1823 Henry Clay was consulting him in an intimate fashion:

"ASHLAND, 4th July, 1823.

"I received your very obliging favor of the 19th ulto. and owe you many thanks for the communication which it contains, and the kind feelings which dictated them.

"There is some foundation for most of the precious confessions made by the leaky supporters of Mr. Calhoun to your friend. With respect to the great effort to be made to elect that gentleman, the past tense as well as the future might have been employed. I am disposed to doubt, for the sake of the President himself, his intermeddling in that object, otherwise than by promotions of the friends of Sec. of War. Mr. Meigs was my friend, and that circumstance may have contributed to his ejection; I have no doubt he will be succeeded by some friend of Mr. Calhoun's whose influence in the affair of appointments evidently is predominant; and I think it probable that Mr. MacLean of Ohio will be appointed. But the election, after all, of Mr. Calhoun is almost next to impossible. The very means employed to produce it, will, as heretofore, operate to his prejudice. Where is the interest to elect him? Give him So. Carolina, and yield him also Pennsylvania (contrary to probability), and it is impossible to take him into another state. He may everywhere have some warm admirers, and a few zealous supporters, but, except in these two states, he has no practical interest to be counted upon in any other. I do not think it is in the compass of all the accidents in the chapter, aided even by intrigue, to secure his election.

"I think the contest at present may be fairly considered as confined to them. If New York and Penna. should fail to indicate their respective preferences, so long before the election, as to operate upon the American public generally, the probability is that the election will devolve on the H. of R. On the contrary, if New York should declare her choice

within the next eight months, by some ambiguous art, the result would be as follows:

"If that choice should fall on Mr. Crawford, there is an end of the Adams pretensions; and the contest would then be between Mr. Crawford and me.

"If on Mr. Adams, there would be an end of Mr. Crawford's pretensions, and the contest would be between Mr. Adams and me.

"If for me, my election would take place by not less than two-thirds of the Union.

"In the first and second suppositions, the contest would be somewhat doubtful. New England would hold the balance between Mr. Crawford and me. I should, I think, enter it with a plurality of votes.

"In the second supposition, much would depend upon Pennsylvania, but I think I should get against Mr. Adams nearly all south and west of New York. Mr. Adams is undoubtedly stronger in the west than Mr. Crawford; he has everywhere some interest, though not an available interest, in a contest with me. Mr. Crawford has nowhere, except in East Tennessee, any interest in the western states. In a contest between them I believe Mr. Adams would get the western vote with the exception possibly of Kentucky and Missouri.

"I write you in confidence and subscribe myself

"Faithfully your Obliged & Ob. Ser.,

"H. Clay."

Just how Mr. Miner came to be so much of a political influence in Washington before he went to Congress it is hard to say. He was a power in the press; through his terms in the Pennsylvania Legislature he knew many men in public affairs, and had visited Washington several times; perhaps it was chiefly through Mr. Clay, with whom, despite their divergent views on many points, he was on cordial and social terms before, during, and after his Congressional career. But that he was an influence with others, is shown

by a torn piece from an old family friend, Dr. Bradley, who writes:

"28th Feby., 1824.

"* * * I fear there is mischief brewing and you alone can prevent it—I do not think it useful to be more explicit until I see you. Mr. C.——y I am told desires greatly to see you here." This is endorsed: "I went and prevented the removal of Dr. Bradley, whose place was wanted for Col. McKinney. Through Mr. T. Johnson, then chr. com. P. O. & R. Roads, Mr. McLean was induced to forbear & Col. McK. was immediately given a place in the Dep. of Com.'

In 1824, being, by his writings, correspondence, and work in the State Assembly, a man of a reputation distinctly more than provincial, Charles Miner was elected to Congress from the districts then comprising Chester, Delaware, and Lancaster counties, James Buchanan, still a Federalist, being his colleague. A friendly letter from Mr. Buchanan, prior to the re-election of both of them two years later, shows the beginning of the political cleavage which was to make Buchanan a Jacksonian Democrat and a believer in the idea that even the discussion of slavery should be prohibited in Congress:

"Lancaster, 8 September, 1826.

"In my opinion there neither is nor will be any foundation for the suggestion that Lancaster county should throw you off for being a friend of the administration. There is, without doubt, in the county, a very great majority of both parties in favor of the election of Gen. Jackson, but the Federalists believe and believe correctly, that they could not with propriety oppose the candidate selected for Congress by the party in Chester county, and thus violate the implied faith existing between the two counties, merely because he differed from them concerning the comparative claims of Mr. Adams and Gen. Jackson. They have no other objection against you; on the contrary, they feel grateful to you for the able, fair and persevering support

which you have always given to the cause. It is possible, nay, probable, that a few of the very warm Jackson men here may not vote for you, as there will be a few very warm Adams men who will not vote for me; but these scattering votes, if there should be such, will be lost in the general result. Upon the whole I should be disappointed if you should not, in this county, run fairly with the Federal ticket, and it is the best and most popular ticket which has for many years been presented to the party.

"The Federal candidate for the Assembly from the city of Lancaster, Cyrus S. Jacobs, Esq., is the decided friend of Mr. Adams, and there was no objection made to settling him upon the ticket on that account. I need not tell you that you shall have my fair support, and that I will do everything in my power to prevent any Federalist from striking you, if I should hear that such is the intention of any.

"By the by, some weeks ago, there were one or two Federal gentlemen from Salisbury township in Chester county. They returned under an impression that your friends there would oppose my election. They received this impression from some intimations of the kind which they heard from persons in West Chester. I will not mention the names of the persons, because it could do no good. I feel satisfied that I have prevented any injury which might have been occasioned by such a report in that township. The name of one gentleman in West Chester was mentioned to me as an enemy to my election, but I did not believe it, and therefore will not repeat his name even to you.

"I have not abandoned the hope of paying you a visit in the course of the present or next month. I wish to make an excursion to the State of Delaware, and if I should, I will pass through West Chester, and return by Chester and Col. Wayne's.

"If you should hear any report that the Federalists in any portion of this county intend to strike you, write to me

without reserve, and I will immediately inquire into the truth of it, and if there should be any foundation for it I shall endeavor to prevent it.

"From your friend,

"JAMES BUCHANAN."

Mr. Miner's two terms, closed by his own decision not to run again, pleasantly coincided with the administration of his friend (as he speedily became) John Quincy Adams—the four years that constituted the only gleam of light, in the Federalist-Whig view, in the four decades of national darkness that began with Jefferson and ended with Van Buren. Intimate letters from President Adams will later be given; and it is interesting to note that the next Whig president, with the exception of the speedily dying Harrison, fully agreed with Adams in his estimate of Mr. Miner; he was, said John Tyler in 1850, the ablest man he had met with from Pennsylvania.

In 1825, when Mr. Miner took his seat, Asher came to West Chester, and, the old-time partnership being resumed, the *Village Record*, during the four years of the junior partner's absence in Washington, was "edited and published by A. & C. Miner."

Mr. Miner's first motions and speeches in the House of Representatives were as they had been in the State Legislature, of a practical nature:

1. Regarding the domestication of the mulberry tree as permitting silk-culture in the United States.

2. Regarding national aid in the construction of the Delaware breakwater.

As to the first of these measures it must be recalled that Mr. Miner* at one time imported mulberry trees and silkworms and had them on his West Chester farm, where their uncertain care was something of a trial to the willing but inexperienced Mrs. Miner. The children gathered the leaves

*See letters January 14, 1826, January 27, 1827, and February 11, 1828.

to feed the worms, and Mrs. Thomas said they could hear the little nibbling sound as the worms ate. An appreciative letter from David Trimble, Trimble's Furnace, Ky., says: (March 3d, 1828): "I beg leave to present my best respects to you, and to ask the favor of one copy of the printed Report—including all the Documents—upon the Subject of Silk, Worms, etc. The request is made of *you* in *particular,* because I wish to have a Copy—as a sort of keepsake—from the member who made the first movement on the subject, and who is likely to acquire some fame by his foresight in the matter." As far back as 1732 the Colonial trustees granted lands to Georgia settlers on condition that they plant mulberry trees, and raise silk worms. About this same time South Carolina, and by 1762, at least, Connecticut, was experimenting with silk culture, and for a time these efforts were active in different parts of the country. In his brochure on "The Silk Industry in America," in a chapter entitled "Workers in Silk Culture from 1825," Dr. L. P. Brockett makes no mention of Mr. Miner, but says: "Many men of honorable and patriotic characters, who honestly believed that by some of the measures proposed, the culture and production of silk might become a national industry * * * demonstrated their faith by their works. * * * Among these the Hon. Peter S. Duponceau deserves perhaps the first place * * * by dint of his personal influence and at great cost of time and labor Mr. Duponceau brought the matter before Congress at several successive sessions."

But in an article on "Silk" in the American Quarterly Review, in December, 1831, it is said: "About the year 1790, Mr. Aspinwall made some effort to introduce silk culture into the States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The period which Mr. Aspinwall chose for introducing the silk culture among us was not well chosen. Commerce in the North, and culture of cotton in the South engrossed the whole attention of our citizens. No more was

heard of silk in this country until about the year 1825. The cotton trade was declining, silk had everywhere taken the place of muslins. The attention of the people of the United States was once more drawn toward the silk culture as the best and most effectual means of advancing at the same time, our agriculture, our manufactures, and our commerce, and thus shaking off our too great dependence on the manufacturing nations of Europe. On the 29th of December, 1825, on the motion of Mr. Miner, a member from Pennsylvania, it was resolved by the House of Representatives of the United States, 'that the Committee on Agriculture be instructed to inquire whether the culture of the mulberry tree and the breeding of silkworms, for the purpose of producing silk, be a subject worthy of legislative attention, and should they think it to be so, whether any legislative provision were necessary or proper to promote the production of silk.'" On the 2nd of May the committee made an elaborate report in which they proceeded to prove not only the expediency, but the indispensable necessity of encouraging that culture "principally for the reasons of the enormous amount of our annual importation of silk goods, compared with our exports of bread stuffs." The committee called for information, and Secretary Rush, who was much interested in the matter, addressed circular letters to all interested. On the basis of this investigation a manual was prepared and presented to the House on February 11, 1828, of which 6,000 were ordered printed. So that it would seem that Mr. Miner was the one to revive interest in silk-culture after a lapse of thirty-five years, by bringing it before the House. President Adams speaks several times in his *Memoirs* of his interest in trying to raise silkworms in the White House gardens.

In supporting the second of these measures Mr. Miner put himself on the federal ground now occupied by all parties, and especially by the newer socialistic propagandas, but then avoided by the "strict constructionists." "Your

commercial cities," said he, "belong to the nation, not to the States where they are located; and it is for the general interest that they should be guarded and protected." The bill was at first rejected, then adopted, not without dissenting votes, but without a division; and Mr. Miner, with three members from Philadelphia, was the recipient of a vote of thanks from the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

December 27, 1827, he spoke on the subject of Revolutionary land-warrants, pleading for means of giving old soldiers a knowledge of their claims, and the power to guard them against shyster speculators.

On February 25, 1828, he delivered in the House another clear and cogent speech in favor of the constitutional power of Congress to make internal improvements, especially in the case of canals.* The Georgia legislature had just voted that the General Government had no right to exercise any power to encourage domestic manufactures or to promote internal improvement; South Carolina, as usual, had done the same thing; and the governor of Virginia, in submitting to his own legislature the resolutions of the two States, had squarely suggested secession, saying that, "in the worst state of things * * * the oppressed sections of country afford abundant means to the local authorities to secure to themselves, in their intercourse with the world, all the salutary independence of nations; to protect themselves, without the least hazard, against physical force from every quarter."

Defending his argument by citations from the reports of the Constitutional Convention, the "Federalist," and other authorities, Mr. Miner asserted his own belief that "In peace or war, for commerce and defence, the means of

*He had already received from the city of New York the gold medal struck in honor of the arrival, in 1825, of the "Seneca Chief," the first canal-boat from Lake Erie, "and," says Mr. Harvey, Lodge No. 61, "Mr. Clay, recognizing at once the abilities and usefulness of the member from Pennsylvania * * * looked to him, more than to any other member of the House, to carry out his views upon the subjects of improvement, the tariff, and a United States bank."

rapid transportation are indispensable. The power of regulating, exclusively, external and internal commerce would seem to carry with it the means of facilitating the transportation of foreign and domestic produce, which is the very life of commerce. All commercial nations have considered the power important to commerce, and have exercised it. * * * The right to make internal improvements would, therefore, seem naturally to flow from the duty of regulating external and internal commerce. But the duty of the common defence, the power of making war, carries with it, by irresistible necessity, the power of facilitating the means of transportation and rapid movements. * * * And can it be conceived, sir, that this government had the power to add an empire to the republic, and that it has not the right to make a road to that empire?"

The speaker did not live to hear the clamors of some parts of the South, after the Civil War, for "the old flag and an appropriation," in Petroleum V. Nasby's phrase; nor did he dream, with all his prophetic foresight, that he was anticipating the Interstate Commerce Commission or the fortified Panama canal of our own day. But in 1859, within six years of his death, he picked up this speech, re-read it, and wrote on the cover: "The argument is unanswerable."

During his term of office he took part in many other debates: on the tariff, the Panama Congress, the Marigny D'auterive case: on a proposed amendment to the constitution, etc. When a bill for pensioning Revolutionary soldiers was introduced into the House [February 24, 1829], he is recorded as enquiring "*with some anxiety* as to the probable amount which the bill would withdraw from the treasury, and its effect in retarding the discharge of the public debt." He was a useful worker on committees, including the one on re-furnishing the White House referred to in the account of his trip to Washington twenty years earlier; but far more important than anything else done in

Congress, was his brave, serious and continued effort to mitigate the evils attending the sale of slaves in the District of Columbia, and ultimately to abolish slavery therein. That he intended to make this his first work is shown by a letter from his wife congratulating him on his resolutions in favor of sending a delegate to the Panama Congress* called by the new Republics of South America.

"West Chester, February 2, 1826.

"So the President was pleased to compliment you on your [Panama] speech. It was very appropriate, well-timed. The administration is pleased with it and so am I. I was afraid you should meddle with the subject of slavery; I thought it a dangerous one, but did not wish to discourage you, so I said nothing about it in my reply to your letter in which you mentioned your intention of noticing it."

Indeed that the Southerners, always on the alert, found in this whole subject and in Mr. Miner's Declaration of Independence expressions "rights of man," "free and equal," etc., in his speech a covert allusion to slavery, is evidenced by a reply by Mr. Floyd of Virginia, January 31, 1826: "Is this Congress [Panama] to tell * * * all of us from the Southern States, that 'all men are free and equal' * * * and if you join us to command the emperor of Brazil to descend from his throne we shall then turn round to you, and say to the United States, 'Every man is free, and if you refuse to make them so we will bring seven Republics in full march to make them so?'" "Will any man pretend such a state of things could exist here?" After Mr. Floyd's impassioned speech Mr. Webster rose and said "he hoped the House would discuss this subject in a manner which became the subject."

In particular fearing the possibility of having to meet a delegate from Hayti on an equality, at this congress, and in general having learned through the struggle over the admission of Missouri, the need of an opportunity to

*See letter January 26, 1826.

spread their pro-slavery views, the slave-holders used and extended this Panama discussion for their own purposes. "The slave-holders had registered their claims. This gave a permanent meaning to the otherwise absolutely fruitless and aimless struggle over the Panama Mission." (Von Holst, Vol. I, P. 433). Mr. Webster supported the president in this matter, and, says Edward Everett, in his Memoir of Daniel Webster, p. 76: "The speech on the Panama question was the most considerable effort made by Mr. Webster in the nineteenth congress."

But it was not until the 13th of May, 1826, that Mr. Miner felt his knowledge of the situation to be full enough to permit him to offer a series of resolutions in favor of doing away at once with the slave trade and the gradual abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The *House Debates* are silent on this subject, as is the *National Journal* in its report of the day's proceedings, but on the 15th it has an editorial note saying that Mr. Miner offered resolutions in favor of *changing the population* of the district in order that a higher white class might come in, and that, though the resolutions were denied at this time, it hoped Mr. Miner would bring the matter before the House later. The *National Gazette* of Philadelphia of May 16, 1826, explained that this "gradual change of population" was to be brought about by the gradual abolition of slavery in the District, and a few days later the same paper printed the text of the resolutions in full.

As these resolutions are important in Mr. Miner's life history as well as in that of the movement and are difficult of access to the general reader (Journal of the House, 19th Congress, 1st Session, 1825—6, p. 559), and are ignored by all but one historian, the text is given entire from the *National Gazette,* Philadelphia, Thursday, May 18th, 1826. This source is chosen because of correlative matter in the same issue.

"The following are the resolutions of Mr. Miner respecting the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, which were mentioned on Tuesday in this gazette:

"Resolved, As the opinion of this House, that it is worthy of inquiry, whether the agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing interests of the District of Columbia would not be promoted by the substitution of a free white population, in the place of that portion of a different description now existing therein, in as much as it would lead to the purchase and cultivation of the waste lands, converting barren fields into fruitful gardens, promote enterprise, and useful improvements, and greatly enhance the value of property in and near the seat of the General Government.

"Resolved, That, considering the number of valuable lives, and the great interests, concentrated in this District, it is worthy the distinct consideration of Patriots and Statesmen, whether those lives and interests ought not to be surrounded by a free white population, interested in the Government, connecting society throughout all its ramifications, and binding it by the sympathies of a common interest; substituting, for the present sub-stratum of society, a band of freemen, an efficient and patriotic militia, the willing, prompt and able defenders of their Government and country, doing away with the necessity of having here a standing military force, so dangerous to liberty, and which must, otherwise, be increased with the increasing evil.

"Resolved, That it is worthy of inquiry, whether the domestic slave-trade, as concentrated and carried on from this District, not growing out of property owned within the District, or connected with the interests of persons here on public service, (the public prisons and persons employed therein, being extensively occupied in such traffic) be not an evil which requires legislative interposition to remedy.

"*Resolved,* That the District of Columbia being placed under the exclusive legislation of the Congress of the United States, ought to exhibit to the nation and to the world, the purest specimen of government, vindicating the superior excellence of free institutions—that, as we are here establishing a city intended as a perpetual capital of a great republic, it is due to ourselves and to posterity, that the foundations thereof be laid in wisdom, and that no fundamental evils in the structure of its policy be permitted to take root, which might become inveterate, by time, but which a prudent and timely policy may eradicate.

"*Be it therefore Resolved,* That the committee on the District of Columbia do take the subjects herein referred to, into consideration, and, if they shall, after full inquiry, be of opinion that the public interests would be promoted thereby, report a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and such restrictions upon the slave-trade therein as shall be just and proper."

In the same issue of the *National Gazette* a letter is quoted from a gentleman who was in the House when these resolutions were offered, telling a friend in Philadelphia about them. Their reading, he said, caused great excitement; Mr. Miner did not ask to have them considered then, but on another day when he would be able to give statements that would induce the House to unite with him in opinion—he hoped unanimously; it had been his intention to bring this up earlier, but he had been busy collecting facts to sustain his proposition. "Many Southern gentlemen seeming much excited it was thought impolitic to bring on the discussion * * * and the object of bringing this very delicate, but most important subject distinctly before the House and the Nation having been effected the House refused to consider the resolutions." "Negatived by an apparently large majority," says Niles Register, May 20, 1826.

The House adjourned on the 22nd of May, 1826, and needless to say "another day" was not given to Mr. Miner,

but the subject having been brought "distinctly before the House, and the Nation," it was considered so important a step in the history of the anti-slavery movement as to call forth, before the beginning of the next session, a resolution of thanks from the old "New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves," the substance of which was as follows:

"*Resolved,* That the thanks of the Society be given to the Hon. Charles Miner, a member of Congress from Pennsylvania for the resolution brought forward by him at the last session of that body, proposing the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and for the determination expressed by him to renew the application for this purpose at the approaching session; and this Society will be much gratified to hear that such application is renewed at the earliest proper opportunity.

"In performing the duty assigned them, the committee would improve the opportunity afforded to express their most fervent hope that the measure you stand pledged to the nation to bring forward will be prosecuted with an earnestness of zeal commensurate with its importance. * * *

"If there be a spot of earth which more than any other on this globe should be regarded as the consecrated ground of freedom, it is the District of Columbia; and the existence of slavery there, by the permission of our republican congress, presents an inconsistency too gross for palliation; and rest assured, sir, that the man by whose instrumentality the stain of this inconsistency shall be removed, shall, besides the high satisfaction arising from the consciousness of having discharged a most important duty, receive the thanks of his country, and live long in the remembrance of grateful posterity."

This tribute was signed by Hiram Ketchum, Thomas Hale, William L. Stone, Ira Clizbe, and Goold Brown.

From the very beginning Congress had been besieged with memorials and petitions, the efforts of the Quakers

being especially earnest in this line. The extinction of the foreign slave-trade, the domestic slave-trade; the abolition of slavery; the betterment of the condition of slaves, etc., found their way into the discussions of the House. Even John Randolph of Roanoke, as far back as 1816, had moved to appoint a committee "to inquire into the existence of an inhuman traffic in slaves carried on in and through the District of Columbia; and report whether any, and what, measures are necessary for the putting a stop to the same." Such a committee was duly appointed, with Randolph himself as chairman; and a subsequent report set forth some facts in the case, but recommended no measure for the suppression, or even the regulation, of the traffic, so the matter dropped. Slavery had been hotly denounced on the floor, as when, for a single example, Tallmadge of New York, in 1819, called it a "monstrous scourge of the human race," in the exciting debates leading to the Missouri Compromise; but with all this it would seem that only once before had a resolution favoring the abolition of slavery, *per se,* been offered to the House. It would be a bold person who would state definitely that this is the case, but a diligent search back to the first Constitutional Congress has found only one earlier series of resolutions offered *on the floor of the House* in favor of the *abolition* of slavery. On February 5, 1820, Mr. Meigs, of New York, submitted resolutions asking that a committee be appointed to consider setting aside public lands as a fund, 1st, for a naval force to annihilate the slave-trade; 2nd, the emancipation of slaves in the United States; 3rd, colonization of Negroes. It will be seen that this went farther in suggesting unlimited abolition, but Mr. Miner felt that to be impossible and thought that if it could be abolished in the District a lever would be furnished with which to accomplish the rest. Mr. Meigs' Resolutions died at their birth, but Mr. Miner followed his more and more trenchantly to the end of his terms. (p. 188.)

In his *Memoir,* Vol. 4, p. 518, under date February 5,

1820, Mr. Adams says: "Walking to my office, Mr. Henry Meigs, member of the House from New York, told me that he had offered this morning several resolutions, with a view to appropriate the proceeds of the public lands to the emancipation of the slaves throughout the union. This, I suppose, is to serve him as an apology to his constituents for voting against the restriction."
[In the Missouri debate.]

The second session of the 19th Congress convened December 4, 1826, and doubtless much encouraged by the approval of his earlier resolutions Mr. Miner seized the first opportunity to speak again on the subject. To his wife he wrote December 27, 1826.

"Where have you been to-night, Master Charles? You shall hear. It is now half-past 9; I have been to Mr. Clay's. I did not intend to go, but Mr. Williams came in and persuaded me. The night before I was at Gen. Jessup's; but did not stay long, for I had pressing business at home, a debate coming on to-day in which I felt a lively interest. It regarded the poor blacks in the District. Col. Ward had introduced the proposition, and he came and asked me to aid in its passage. The House was in the highest possible state of excitement. After some effort I got the floor. Fortunately I was cool—self-possessed—spoke sad things to hear, yet in the mildest and most persuasive manner I possibly could. The House listened with all the attention I could wish till I had got nearly through. I wandered a little on purpose; there were some things I wished to introduce, and I took the opportunity to do so, on the subject of the enormities of the slave-trade, etc., in the District. When I had got nearly to the end Mr. Brent called me to order, not angrily. I do think, pardon me for saying so, that from my mild, conciliatory tone and manner, though I said most unpleasant things, yet the feelings of irritation were soothed. You will see the report in the papers. Mr. Reed of Massachusetts took me by the hand and thanked

me. Mr. Wright of Ohio told me he was sorry Mr. Brent interrupted me, etc. The feeling was certainly favorable. 'So much for so much' as my good father used to say."

In the course of Mr. Ward's long speech inquiring if there was any law authorizing the imprisoning and selling free men of color, Mr. Miner introduced this, his second annual resolution looking toward the gradual abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The resolution was objected to by the speaker and withdrawn by Mr. Miner but later in the day he spoke on the subject, saying: "He rose, especially to reply to a remark by several gentlemen, seeming to imply that this matter ought not to be discussed because it created so much excitement and irritation. Such certainly was the case, and he regretted that it was so. The whole interests of the District are confined to our jurisdiction. No power but that of the General Government could operate here. Slavery existed within the District and the subject must be regulated by Congress. It was not only our right but our duty. It was impossible to do this intelligently without inquiry and free discussion. This was felt to be a subject of delicacy; no one felt it more sensibly than himself. It is always painful to excite unpleasant feelings; such was never his wish; and it was a matter of regret with him when, in the performance of duty, such was ever the consequence. In his opinion every subject that it was our duty to regulate and legislate upon, ought to be considered proper to be introduced here and freely discussed, without exciting pain or passion. It was in fact the case, that owing to the painful excitement growing out of any motion on the subject here, it had been utterly neglected. Gentlemen from neither section of the union like to take any step in relation to it. The consequence was there had been no amelioration of the laws growing out of the system of slavery here, for the thirty years the District had been under the jurisdiction of the General Government. In other States improvements had been made; their codes

had been ameliorated; here, from the cause alluded to, they had been entirely neglected." He then went on to state sad facts, and added, "All would go to show that the whole subject of slavery within the District needed our interference, and ought to be discussed with freedom and good temper." To which it was replied that it was a "delicate subject" " well calculated to produce excitement and alarm in the slave-holding states." [Summary in Congressional Debates, 1826-27, p. 563.]

These speeches of Mr. Ward and Mr. Miner had the effect of leading the committee to introduce a bill, on January 11, 1827, to repeal the objectionable laws. The House however, refused the bill.

On New Year's day of 1828 Mr. Miner wrote to his friend, Jacob Cist, in Wilkes-Barré, who, in addition to many other gifts was an artist of no mean ability:

"I am employed in gathering information respecting slavery and the slave-trade in this District. It has increased more than any other business since you were here, and is now carried on at wholesale. Besides hundreds in the prisons, brought in and confined here for sale, there are houses kept for their reception, where pens are made and the southern traders hold their headquarters. Are there any facts in your knowledge that would apply to the subject? or can you give me information or advice where to apply or how to proceed? It is so long since you were here I cannot hope for much, but should like to know whether it prevailed when you were here. I have also to beg the favor of you to give me a sketch for engraving of a gang of fourteen negroes, men chiefly, one or two women, hand-cuffed, and chained together as they iron them here to send them off. An ox-chain runs from front to rear in the centre; then the poor wretches are hand-cuffed, right and left hand, to this chain in pairs. Perhaps fourteen figures would be too many to task you to sketch. I wish also, if you can (how much labor is it? no matter, it is in a holy cause), I wish

you would sketch a mother forced from her children—turning, wringing her hands, and in despair exclaiming: 'Oh! my children! my children!' I mean to bring the matter before Congress, and I wish to be armed at all points for offence and defence." It is not known whether or not these drawings were made, but on March 24, 1828, he presented the "memorial" he was then preparing, which is printed in full, "House Document 215," in the "Executive Documents."

This "Memorial of the Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, praying for the gradual abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia," was far-reaching in its scope. Pointing out the inconsistency between the laws making the foreign slave-trade piracy, punishable with death, and the District laxity which permitted a possibly free negro to be seized, imprisoned, and auctioned off for life for non-payment of jail fees, the memorial went on to attack the institution of slavery itself, as having "an evident tendency to corrupt the morals of the people, and to damp the spirit of enterprise by accustoming the rising generation to look with contempt upon honest labor, and to depend, for support, too much upon the labor of others." It accordingly proposed laws "to prevent slaves from being removed into this District, or brought in for sale, hire, or transportation; without, however, preventing members of Congress, resident strangers, or travellers from bringing and taking away with them their domestic servants;" the repeal of laws authorizing the selling of supposed runaways for their prison fees or maintenance; and a system of gradual emancipation whereby "all children of slaves born in the District of Columbia after the fourth day of July, eighteen hundred and twenty-eight, shall be free at the age of twenty-five years." Slavery had been or was gradually being abolished in the Northern States. Many States had done much for the betterment of their slaves; his own State with its oldest society for abolition in the country, was behind him in this

special effort; many petitions from various sources had been sent to Congress, and he had been the medium through which some had been presented; but the present petition—one of the signers being Chief Justice Cranch of the District, father of the poet—was especially important being "sustained by sixteen slave-holders in the District and more than one thousand property-holders in the District." Besides this petition was his own; the work of his own brain, hand and heart, and the hard work he put on it, gathering facts and securing signatures, caused it to stand out particularly in his later memory. A little before the presentation of this petition a constituent in West Chester wrote urging him to be more cautious: "You must be a Colonization man and you must not push that Abolition of slavery in the District too hard—the rusty old gun will kick most confoundedly—this is not the time—wait a little—let us get more friends in the South and West—and let us deserve their friendship and confidence by a cordial co-operation in their Colonization plan." But letters like this did not discourage him in the least.

His final effort, into which he threw himself with all his powers, was the introduction on January 6, 1829, of his preamble and resolution, directing the committee on the District to inquire into the slave-trade in the District, and closing: "That the committee be further instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing by law for the gradual abolition of slavery within the District, in such manner that the interests of no individual shall be injured thereby." In offering it he represented not only his own opinion but that of his State; for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives had, at its previous session, almost unanimously expressed its opinion that slavery in the District ought to be abolished, "in such manner as they [Congress] may consider consistent with the rights of individuals and the Constitution of the United States." As was his wont he prepared himself with the greatest care for this speech. It was his

custom all through his residence in Washington to visit the prisons and the auction sales; to know all that could be known of the private "dens" where kidnapped free negroes were packed as closely as possible; to learn all he could by private conversation with keepers; and in every way to be sure, especially when approaching a speech, that his information was full and accurate. On the 7th of January, the day after the introduction of the resolutions, he supported them by his speech. Naturally the atrocities cited and the arguments offered were largely the same as in previous speeches. Having set forth the constitutional right (and duty) of Congress to correct abuses in the District; —"If evils exist we alone can remedy them. If injustice and oppression prevail we alone are responsible"—he went on to marshal his army of facts. He had papers furnished him by keepers of jails showing the hundreds of negroes who were yearly imprisoned on the plea of debt, or for no cause; he drew the distressing pictures that later became so familiar of negroes ruined for life by the dampness, blackness and vermin of their cells; of the separations of families, the chain-gangs, etc.

He suggested what must be the feelings of a foreigner who should come with "anxious pleasure" to the "ten miles square, where the united wisdom and unrestricted power of the nation operate. * * * And what objects are presented to his view? At one market he meets a crowd, and as he passes near, behold it is a constable exhibiting a woman for sale subjected to the scoffs and jeers of the unfeeling! He is selling her for a petty debt, under the authority of the sanction of Congress! Well may he exclaim 'The age of chivalry is gone forever'! To remove the painful impression, he takes up a newspaper and reads: 'Cash in the market and the highest price for men and women.' He walks abroad, sees a gang of slaves hand-cuffed together, a long chain running between them connecting the whole: miserable objects of horror and despair, marching off under the com-

mand of the slave-traders." While the States from which the District had been set apart had been bettering the condition of their slaves Congress had failed to keep pace with them: "This District ought to be the best governed in the Universe. It is absolutely the worst." He urged that "nothing can contribute more to the insecurity of property, than instances of cruelty, shocking to the moral sense publicly exhibited; that the South are therefore interested to put a stop to the slave-trade here." He charged that "officers of the Federal Government had been employed and had derived profit from carrying on this trade," and so on through the whole sad gamut. Then, as in the earlier speeches, in the hope of avoiding rupture, he went on to propose indemnity: "I would not," said he, "be rash; I would propose no sudden disruption of existing interests; I am no friend to sudden revolutions; what I would propose would be that measures should be advanced to effect the abolition of slavery here gradually. The slave-trade, and the public sale of men and women, I would instantly interdict. Provision ought to be made that no person should be injured in his interests to the least amount. Should any such case occur, ample indemnity should be given. Ten years is much in a man's life, yet it is a brief space in the life of a city. The change ought to be so gradual that it should only be felt and known by the blessings and prosperity it would shed abroad over the whole District. By a law that should protect the District from being overrun by free negroes, which should exclude the further introduction of slaves to reside here permanently, and which should provide that persons born after a certain period to be fixed upon, should be free, with other salutary regulations, this degraded caste would gradually disappear, like darkness before the opening day."

The principal reply to Mr. Miner was made by Mr. Weems, of Maryland, who, like his predecessor in the debate, was serving his last term as representative. It relied

largely upon the "Cursed be Canaan" argument; and asserted that legislation on moral subjects tended to set up "the edicts of an ecclesiastical hierarchy." He stated that every master loved good slaves, but called the men of color on sale in Washington at once "worse than wild beasts" and "the most sprightly fellows." His neatest hit was "an awful inquiry, to be found in the sacred volume of truth * * * 'who art thou, oh, vain man, that condemneth another man's servant; before his own master he standeth or falleth.'"

Mr. Miner having accepted an amendment with the modified expression "it is alleged that," etc. the preamble was nevertheless rejected (January 9), yeas 37, nays 141; but the resolution directing inquiry into the slave-trade was adopted, 120 to 59; and that regarding the expediency of gradual abolition was also adopted, 114 to 66. Notwithstanding this two-to-one vote, the slave-holding speaker, Stevenson, says Henry Wilson, in his "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America," "so constituted the committee that no further action was taken on the subject." Wilson characterizes the speech as "earnest and effective;" but family tradition, often voiced by his daughter, Mrs. Thomas, gives it greater praise from a higher source, for she remembered that after the speech Daniel Webster, despite his general views, put his arm over his shoulder and exclaimed: "Mr. Miner, you have lighted a torch that will set fire to the whole country." Mrs. Thomas also remembered that his family were very anxious for his personal safety. Naturally he was delighted at his success, and immediately scribbled a little letter to Mrs. Miner: "My resolutions have occupied the chief part of the day. The resolutions were both adopted by large majorities; the preamble, as I expected, rejected. I am, so far as I can be, away from you, the happiest dog in Christendom." To a relative he wrote next day: "I have been so busy the ten days past I have neglected everything but my slave resolutions."

On a stray leaf that seems not to be from the *Autobiography* Mr. Miner begins an account of the passing of these resolutions, and their reception: "It should be observed that Resolutions similar in purpose had been introduced so early as 1825 [this must be a slip for 1826, for none such can be found in 1825], and again at a later period but aware of its importance I thought it decorous and proper—just to the people of the District, indeed to the whole country not to press the matter to a hasty decision. The House acted on it after full deliberation, and as will be seen, with the hearty acquiescence of those most intimately concerned—the People of the District themselves. This has been so entirely misrepresented by the slave-traders, an active, fearless and influential class, * * * and misunderstood by large numbers of truth-seeking citizens, that a more full exposition of the matter is evidently demanded. * * *

"It will be noted that introduced on the 6th, they were not finally disposed of till the 9th, allowing ample time for deliberation. The majorities were increased (I think) by ten or twelve members from slave-holding states." Then follows the only apparent bitterness in any record:

"But it is painful to add that the Hon. John Bell though fully apprised (as the documents now adduced will show) of the earnest wishes of the people of the District, and of the deep enormity and cruelty, and shameful publicity of the slave auction on Pennsylvania Avenue, and the numerous [illegible] in different quarters, yet he recorded his vote, each and every time, against the proposed measure.

"What seems irreconcileable with any idea of justice and liberality is his vote against the first resolution to enquire into the laws within the District in respect to slavery and the slave-trade.

"The refusal even to permit an inquiry was the more extraordinary, as the Grand Jury had presented the slave

trade as an insufferable nuisance. And *more than a thousand* of the intelligent, opulent, business men (a majority of them it is presumed slave-holders) had the preceding year presented a petition expressing their wishes on the subject, which was then before the House and Mr. Bell. Its vast importance will more than counterbalance objection to its length. It shows the *Popular Sovereignty* opinion of the inhabitants—it refutes the slander that the free States interferred against the wishes of the People. It exhibits the recorded opinion—feelings and doctrines of the Hon. John Bell."

Anti-slavery opinion outside of Washington promptly recognized the service he had done; thus William Rawle, S. Dist. Col., wrote from Philadelphia, January 14, 1829:

"Permit me to express the great pleasure I feel at your efforts in respect to the disgraceful continunace of slavery in the District of Columbia having so far succeeded as to go to a committee. It will, I hope, prove an entering wedge on this important subject; and if nothing effectual should be done during the present session it will be at least laying a foundation which your successors will not, I hope, lose sight of. I could have wished you to have received more support from your colleagues, but the honor to yourself is greater by standing so much alone." (See p. 184.)

At that time anti-slavery opinion in Philadelphia and New York rather looked toward purchase, colonization, and milder measures of removing the evil; while in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maryland just a little later, the young Garrison was beginning to write newspaper articles advocating speedier or more violent measures of emancipation. In passing it may be said that the writer has read a private letter by Mr. Garrison (years since but the memory is vivid) speaking coolly of Mr. Miner and his hope of gradual emancipation, as too moderate—as it naturally would seem to the radical—but let it be remembered that in his first anti-slavery address in Boston, July 4th, 1829, after all Mr.

Miner's work was done in the House, Mr. Garrison said (Old South Leaflets p. 9): "The emancipation of all the slaves of this generation is most assuredly out of the question. The fabric, which now towers above the Alps, must be taken away brick by brick, and foot by foot, till it is reduced so low that it may be overturned without burying the nation in its ruin. Years may elapse before the completion of the achievement; generations of blacks may go down to the grave," etc.

It may be doubted, however, whether any reformer in the twenties was doing more good, or spreading a wider influence, than Charles Miner. Never a radical regarding immediate measures, but never yielding in his general hostility to slavery, he proceeded along those conservative but finally irresistible lines which, thirty-three years later, were followed by Abraham Lincoln, who it is well known, at the end of the war, seriously contemplated that other plan of Mr. Miner's which the radicals despised—remuneration. "He [Lincoln] went on to say that he would be willing to be taxed to remunerate the southern people for their slaves * * * he should be in favor, individually, of the government's paying a fair indemnity for loss of the owners." Rhodes, *History of the United States,* Vol. 5, p. 71.

During his congressional career Mr. Miner sent to his wife—who, as their financial circumstances were narrow, remained with the children in West Chester—a series of letters which give bits of the panorama of Washington life through the period of one administration; glimpses of the personal and social features of a capital which in some ways was on a level with the best European courts and in some rather in the rough, notwithstanding the proper aristocracy of President Adams, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and others, and also offer nearly the best picture of his own happy, optimistic, loving nature, almost boyish in its enthusiasms and its naive vanity, and at the same time broad, farsighted and serious in its aims. Extracts from them may be

given in chronological order, with such notes as will make clear the public allusions.

[December 6, 1825.]

"Mr. Webster came to me to-day to challenge me as a New England man. I told him that my heart was all Pennsylvanian; but yet I loved the place of my birth. Mr. Everett does not look the least as I expected; he sits with a modest downcast eye, and you would not suppose he ever spoke above his breath in his life."

[December 17, 1825.]

"I suppose the President was not displeased with my frank, unceremonious, but awkward introduction, as he has sent me one of the earliest invitations to visit him; but I suppose that was mere chance. He gives all the members dinners; it is a matter of mere ceremony without any heart in it." In his *Memoir,* Vol. 7, p. 74, date December 8, 1825, Mr. Adams says:

"I had a continual succession of visitors. 48 members of the House and 4 Senators. Mr. Miner of Pennsylvania came and introduced himself, but stayed not more than five minutes."

[December 21, 1825.]

"According to invitation I dined [torn] with the President. I understand it is [torn] to be invited before the Holy-days, so [torn] said he had refused to [torn] Mr. Munroe because he was invited after them. * * * Mr. Adams stood in a circle of gentlemen, met us, shook hands and led us in to Mrs. Adams, who sat at the *dot,* [Mr. Miner often accompanied his descriptions by plans or pictures] nearest the fire; the other dots represent other ladies, to whom there was no formal introduction. Mr. Adams presently came up and chatted a few minutes. I asked after his father, speaking of his faculties. I told him I hoped he retained his hearing well; he understood my

allusion and [quoted from] 'Tristram Shandy.' * * * Dinner was now announced. * * * Mr. Clay early caught my eye and asked me to take wine with him; that seemed to be the fashion. Gen. Van Rensselaer did so, and so did another. In my turn I challenged Mr. Cook, and afterwards Mr. McDuffy. On each plate was a napkin, I need not say of the finest and whitest, in which was wrapped up a little loaf of bread. In the middle of the table, as you see represented, was a—I know not its name—like a large tea-tray, or waiter; it must be fourteen feet long, of bronze, the bottom of silver, bright as possible, highly wrought and beautifully ornamented. At intervals of every two feet rose on the verge a female figure about eight inches in height, of fine attitude and proportion, holding in each hand a candle, which made twenty-eight candles around the edge. In the inside were four groups of figures, a foot in height, of elegant forms, attitudes and proportions, and a fifth in the centre. * * * Each hoop held on the heads a basket of artificial flowers (I can't draw). The centre was a large golden vase, held up by dancing Bacchants filled with wine and grapes and flowers. It was very classical, and the most splendid thing I ever saw. It belongs to us the people, and must have cost many thousand dollars."

[This elaborate structure has come down to our own day. In response to a query as to its survival, Mrs. William H. Taft kindly wrote to Mrs. Richardson, May 16, 1913:

"When I was in the White House I used for state dinners a decoration which has come down from Monroe's time. He got it in Paris, and there is a full account of it in the "History of the White House" in two volumes. It has gone out of print now. That, I think, was the decoration that your grandfather spoke about. * * * The decoration is twelve or fourteen feet long. The candlesticks, four, with branches for twelve candles, and fruit dishes with figures on them, make a fine addition to the set; and probably in your grandfather's time they used the candlesticks round the

edge. True, it is gold now, but perhaps it was formerly bronze and silver. At any rate, Monroe got it for the White House, and it was undoubtedly that decoration. Mrs. Draper, who lives in Washington, has the same decoration, which her father, General Preston, left her. He was minister to Spain, and he got the decoration in Paris, the same as Monroe did, and I think they are the work of some noted decorator."]

"From the ceiling hung chandeliers full of lamps. A ham that stood before Mr. McDuffy was not skinned, but the skin cut in figures, part only being taken off. * * * We had many things which from the cooking I could not judge what they were, but we had birds, venison, hams, chicken-pie, canvas-back ducks, soup at first, of course, the canvas-backs the last of meats. Then came ice cream, pineapples, oranges, apples, grapes, raisins, olives, and golden-bladed knives with pearl handles to help eat them with. After perhaps an hour the gentlemen rose, and the ladies left the table. This brought Mr. McDuffy next to me and we fell into chat; we sat perhaps a quarter of an hour when we all rose and went into the drawing room." * * *

[January 14, 1826.]

"My trifling silk resolution brings me abundance of letters, notices, and communications. It takes exceeding well. I think it proper; but it is still a trifle. * * * Did I tell you Gov. Cass was added to our mess? A very pleasant man; full of sprightliness and intelligence. * * * Yesterday I dined with Mr. Buchanan; he had delivered a great speech, really a great one,* and is not very well, so I went to dine with him. He feels the force of it and well he may. He made this remarks: 'That House is no respecter of persons; it exalts the humble and abases the proud'—that is every bill must stand on its own bottom."

*On the Judiciary system, January 14, 1826.

[January 26, 1826.]*

"To-morrow's *Intelligencer* will bring you my speech and proposition, on a most important subject. I was, in speaking, very much embarassed, but, my friends assure me, not so much so but that I was perfectly understood. They tell me my voice fills the hall entirely, which is something here. I produced a stir among the colts. Mr. Forsyth rose after me and spoke some time. Col. Trimble has just been in my room; he had been in before to tell me that I must speak on a resolution that will be called up to-morrow, calling for papers relative to the Panama Mission. He assures me my resolution was well timed, and the Administration will be obliged to me. I can't be more particular now. Though nothing to boast of as to manner, you need not be ashamed of your Charles, whose special pride would be to deserve your praise and love, dear Letitia."

And two days later:

"I am called by name mighty familiarly by dozens since Thursday, who did not know me before. But this is to yourself, I charge you, when I venture to be a little vain, a very little for I have very little reason, it is not what I have done, but that I have broken in on the House. You must not expose me. The highest wish I have is that I may make myself worthy of your love. * * * I am industrious still; when well am up an hour before day—I begin to hope not without some utility. The thing is whispered about and I get credit for my industry if not the fruits of it. Mr. Everett and myself, though not very intimate are becoming very sociable. He told me to-day that two or three times he had almost taken the floor, but did not. The truth is the greatest and strongest man is awed here. The man without sensibility is awed nowhere. And though I tumbled heels over head on the floor to force myself there

*Evidently this is a slip for January 25, as the *National Intelligencer*, of January 26, 1826, records: "The subject of the Panama Mission has, it will be seen, been introduced into the House of Representatives by Mr. Miner of Pennsylvania."

I would not be placed back again where I was last Monday for the best cause in Christendom, or the best 1,000 pounds, as you please. I yesterday spoke again a few words, called for by the occasion, pretty well and without much embarassment. So we go."

[January 28, 1826] Second letter.

"I have been to the French Minister's party. Gen. Metcalf and myself set out in a carriage at 8. The fog was so dense the driver got lost; it was very strange; one or two coaches were upset; and some quite lost. At last we arrived, the doorway was crammed with carriages. We left our cloaks and hats in the entry. Well, this is the house [plan]: 4 is the entry where we left our cloaks; we turned to the left into No. 2, where were ladies and gentlemen, and we were introduced to the Baron Montreuil—you have the card I believe. The little figures thus; in the room was a mirror—like a door reaching from the floor, and many thought it was a door into another room. In No. 3 was a crowd so closely packed it seemed impossible to move, and yet two sets of cotillions were dancing. A few sat down on the outside, but four-fifths stood up. In the recess, No. 5, sat the musicians. After cotillions came waltzes, very sprightly, but I do not think modest, then cotillions again. Servants dressed in black carried around refreshments constantly, consisting of wine, punch, chocolate, cakes, figs, raisins, and beans, I believe, and ice-cream. I was introduced to Gen. Smith of Baltimore; talked with Gen. Harrison about minuets and ladies' hoops; you elbowed a general or a count—or a minister, or a great lady every step you took; but they were not near so handsome, nor better dancers, nor more easy nor graceful than our Chester County ladies. The rooms were well, but not very richly furnished. Over the doorlike mirror in room No. 2 was a beautiful picture of the late King of France. On the mantel, as an ornament, was a clock, with a bronze figure leaning over it, in a graceful attitude, on each side

a female bronze figure about two feet high, the hands to a basket on the head, the basket was a candlestick. No. 2, the dancing-room, was lighted by elegant chandeliers. In No. 4 were four parties playing, three at cards, one at chess; among those at cards was the British Minister. The British secretary of legation, who has just arrived, was there. He wore mustaches—that is his upper lip was not shaved and the beard was an inch long and looked singular. He is near-sighted and used his eye-glass constantly as the parties danced. I have only room to tell you, and I do it in the strictest confidence—not even Ann is to know it, nobody but Sarah—that a member came to me to-night who had been at the President's, who said: 'The resolution of Mr. Miner was proper and well timed.' The Administration were pleased and the accompanying remarks were no less appropriate. There, hussy!"

To which she replies: "I must not be called hussy, it sound too Swift-ish, and you know I do not like him, you may call me goose-cap, madam impudence, or anything but hussy."

[February 1, 1826.]

"I am this day 46. My life has been full of events. From a poor boy, a wanderer in the Susquehannah wilds, I fortunately found my way to your arms (I wish I was there now), and step by step to this position—no mean position—to the honored councils of my country. I have had many trials, but a thousand blessings have been showered upon me. I desire to be humble and grateful. * * * I would give half the world to spend a couple of days, dear Lete, with you. Write to me; tell me you love me; and when I come home and go to work, and give up public life, you will still love me, and then I shall be happy."

[February 13, 1826.]

"Gov. Cass has gone; we were all sorry to lose him. He is below the middle height, thick-set, full round face, with an agreeable expression of countenance. On his upper lip,

on the left side, a mole. Bald head, but the hair behind gathered into a roll, and brought forward so that at first it would not be discerned. A fine scholar, writes well, extremely pleasant in conversation. * * * I have dropped my watch and injured it. Did I tell you before? I could cry. It was the prettiest thing I ever had. It seemed as if, in the night, I touched the spring it could talk to me. It kept excellent time, and intimate as we were together there is not one in the mess who knew it was a repeater. I mention this because you and father would think that I should be like William, delighted to let everybody know what a pretty plaything I have."

[February 15, 1826.]

"You will see the debates on Mr. Miner's resolution, calling for information. At least you will perceive that I touched no idle string. I don't know what I may make yet, but begin to have hopes of myself. I have made no great figure here; not so much by half in the House as in the newspapers; but so far * * * I would not change situations with any new member of the whole 85 who has come here, and that is saying something—even though they should give me all their wealth to boot—unless it were for giving the money to you, deary. But this is for yourself alone. * * * The debate of day before yesterday, is thought, on my part to have been direct and pointed, except the geese that lay golden eggs, and that was thrown in on a full deliberation and has done me some service."*

[February 25, 1826.]

"I have received a complimentary letter from New England with ten skeins of beautiful sewing silk of different

*On February 13, 1826, Mr. Miner asked for information as to tonnage, etc., in Delaware Bay, in order that the House might be in a position to discuss wisely the need of a breakwater. In reply to a question from Mr. Webster as to whether Mr. Miner desired this simply because it would be locally helpful to Pennsylvania, Mr. Miner formulated his guiding principle in all such matters; that in the House nothing should be promoted for local reasons, only, but for the good of the whole country. His bill was adopted February 16, 1826.

and most elegant colours. I have shown them to many members, and shall send them to Mrs. Adams to examine. Unless the General's lady begs them, I mean to keep them to send to one I love better than any general's lady in Christendom."

[March 11, 1826.]

"Asher will show you my letter, or tell you of Professor Everett's great display.* It was not the weight of argument so much as the astonishing, overwhelming outpouring of a torrent of eloquence. Every word was made to weigh as much as ten from an ordinary man. Ah, it was surprising and delightful—except his, I had almost said foolish confession of faith respecting slavery and in favor of it. Oh, that he might be made to feel the impolicy and impropriety of it!"

Mr. Mitchell of Tennessee, and John Randolph of Virginia, both slave-holders, objected, with others, to Mr. Everett's statements with regard to slavery in this speech.

[March 15, 1826.]

"Well, haven't I told you where I dined? You shall know. Mr. Webster came as unexpectedly as anything possibly could be, and gave me one of those frank and hearty invitations to dine with him and Mrs. Webster, that was worth a thousand billets. I went; met a few Boston friends of Mr. W.'s; was of course treated with cordiality—taken after dinner to the library, and some confidential conversation passed. I suppose you know what an eminent man he is.

"Since Mr. Everett delivered his great speech, I have not spoken to him till to-day, though we sit near. We met on committee, and after adjourning and the rest went out, he chid me for not speaking, and said he was afraid I was offended at his declaration in favor of slavery. I told him with perfect candor and truth my impressions that his first position was erroneous; that it was felt to be so by all

*Mr. Everett's speech in the debate on the Constitution, March 9, 1826.

the House; that some began to look down, some to read their letters and papers; that when he came to declare his sentiments on the subject of slavery, it was like pouring cold water down our backs; that it was liable to misapprehension, though sincere, for just then the Senate were delaying to confirm the nomination of Mr. Sergeant on account of his opposition to slavery, and it would look (and be so ascribed) like a sacrifice to the southern opinion to pave the way for an easy confirmation of himself should he be nominated. With regard to the first position, he told me he had submitted it to Mr. Webster and he had approved, etc. I told him Mr. Webster was wrong with respect to slavery.* He said he had consulted [illegible] on that subject, fearing it would bear the look I suggested, who told him it would not. I bade him prepare himself for a fiery ordeal, for he would have to pass through one; but I gave him due praise for his succeeding effort. You see the consultation was free and confidential, and I wish no one to see this part but Asher and Dr. Thomas.† I am

*The conservative attitude of Webster, Everett, George Ticknor, and others of the inner circle of aristocratic "Webster Whigs" in Boston, for many years, is well known. Two months later than this —March 9, 1826—Mr. Everett said: "The great relation of servitude, in some form or other, with greater or less departure from the theoretic equality of men, is inseparable from our nature. Domestic slavery is not, in my judgment, to be set down as an immoral and irreligious relation. It is a condition of life, as well as any other, to be justified by morality, religion, and international law." When governor of Massachusetts, in 1836, he intimated in a message to the legislature that abolition newspapers and societies in that State might be made subjects of local prosecution: "Whatever by direct and necessary operation is calculated to excite an insurrection among the slaves has been held by highly respectable authority an offense against the peace of the Commonwealth, which may be prosecuted as a misdemeanor at common law."

†Asher was, of course, his brother and partner, then living in West Chester. Dr. Thomas, sometimes called "the Doctor" in these letters, was Mr. Miner's son-in-law, Isaac Thomas, an honored physician in West Chester, who had married his oldest daughter, Ann Charlton. "Joseph," to whom confidential communications were also sometimes sent, was another son-in-law, Joseph John Lewis, long afterwards Lincoln's Commissioner of Internal Revenue, who had married Mr. Miner's third daughter, Mary Sinton.

invited to the Dutch Minister's to a party, day after to-morrow evening; shall I go? I have kept away from parties for a good while, being much engaged in business, laborious and requiring careful investigation; but making no show on committee. I do not know of anything else that would please you; if I did I would say it. Cherish kind feelings for me; we have had many, many happy days together; I do not know that life could have gone more smoothly, considering we have always been poor, and the vicissitudes of sickness will inevitably occur. I think as now I grow an old fellow, 46 last month, of your song we'll 'sleep thegither at the foot.' But you are young, I see you as you were at nineteen, and love and respect, and sincerely regard you for your mind, which is kind, and pure, and intelligent; and I feel, as I think I ought to feel, that in sickness it would be the greatest relief to have you near except that it would give you pain; and that in health and prosperity and joy, if such should be our lot, it would all be doubled by laying my cheek to yours and having you kiss me and say—Well, this is pleasant!"

[March 29, 1826.]

"I wrote yesterday, and I thought I would write a long one to-day, but don't feel a bit in the humor. I feel as if there was a ton weight off my mind. My speech, they tell me, must also be printed in pamphlet form. Gen. Van Renssellaer has been to me and wants a parcel. Gen. McKeen wants some; Mr. Webster says it must be carefully reported and sent out. Mr. Hopkinson, the great lawyer, is here. He came to me and got me by the hand and thanked me for my speech; agreed with me in principle, etc. I am as vain as Ellen with a new lace. I am glad I did not know he was in the House, yet I am glad, as it happened, that he was.*

Mr. Miner spoke on February 24, 1826, and again on March 28, 1826, on the conservative side in the debate on

*See letter of May 3, 1826.

amending the constitution with regard to the election of president and vice-president. The closing words of the second speech commend themselves to constitutionalists in 1915. "To change, to change, to change is the highway to disorder in private affairs, and to anarchy in public, and anarchy is the broad road to despotism." He shortly after received the following leter of congratulation from De Witt Clinton:

"ALBANY, 19th April, 1826.

"I am much indebted to you for your excellent speech. As far back as 1802, I proposed an amendment to the Constitution for the establishment of electoral districts and am still of opinion that it would preserve the purity of the choice of electors, better than any other system, in bringing the subject to the people who cannot be easily corrupted, and in breaking down extensive combinations. I agree with you, however, in the general tone and spirit of your views, believing frequent changes dangerous; and that favored as we are with the most distinguished blessings, we ought not to endanger the whole in speculative attempts.

"Your hasty account of the affair between Randolph and Clay turns out to be accurate. It is much to be regretted. A member of Congress is for everything done or said in his place to every person not a member, a non-combatant, and I should suppose that there is no canon in the code of duelling which requires a Secretary to call out a member. The precedent is pernicious; and as its spirit is very easy of infusion into our ardent young men, I should not be surprised to see imitations follow closely and frequently on its heels.

"I am sincerely and respectfully your friend,

"DEWITT CLINTON."

The latter part of this letter refers to a subject that troubled Mr. Miner all his life: the practice of duelling, especially in the Southern states. Down to the assault of Brooks on Sumner, in 1856, he never ceased to denounce it

as not only anachronistically brutal, but cowardly,—the very prevalence of the custom in the South giving the men of that section a familiarity with "drop shots" which was not, fortunately, existent at the North, and therefore offered to swaggerers an unequal chance in the field, which they mistook for courage.

[April 8, 1826.]

"I went to the President's yesterday; the interview was very agreeable, frank and social."

[April 10, 1826.]

"I always loved you better than you did me, and I never wished for goods, wealth, anything, only as I could share it with you, and make you happy. Your poetic quotations were too flattering, but still agreeable, as they showed good taste and reading. I always knew your mind was of the higher order. I do not know in a single instance you have judged erroneously in matters of literature or taste. Since you first came to my bosom I have loved your mind for its correctness and purity, as well as your person for everything that could render one near us agreeable; and the wish for your happiness and the children's is the first in my heart."

[April 22, 1826.]

"Oh, the President's! Yes, we had a charming time. Mr. Adams received us standing up, with the gentlemen around him; the ladies we bowed to, they sitting. Mr. Adams then entered into conversation with me, with great frankness; some other gentlemen came up, and he went to meet them. Having taken up as much of his time as I thought fair, I retired and was chatting with some others, when Col. Trimble came to tell me the President expected me to return, so back I went, and we got our heads together again. * * * We did not dine in the long room, but in the usual dining parlour. The plateau and candlesticks were superb; but not on so large a scale as in the other

room. The party was more select; the wines, particularly a kind I never saw before, delicious. Indeed, these things before I had cared nothing about. The truth is, the Panama question had just been settled by a glorious vote in its favor; I had taken a deep interest in the measure, and had contributed by my resolution and remarks a good deal to advance it. Mr. Adams was well pleased; and why should I not let feelings flow a little? I then thought, I wish my Lete was here."

[May 3, 1826.]

"I have just returned from the President's drawing-room. * * * I pointed out the chief great men to [some Chester and Delaware County constituents]. Introduced Mr. Pennock, who was next me, to Mr. Clay, Mr. Storrs, Gen. Brown, Mr. Adams, and young Mr. Adams. They got ice-cream, coffee, and punch, and seemed to be, I presume they were, very happy. Mr. Webster came to me with more than ordinary kindness, quite out of his usual course; got his arm around me, and declared to Gov. Barbour that my speech was the best and soundest argument on the Constitution that was delivered.* It was part flattery, doubtless; but before such company, and the manner, it being uncalled for by the occasion, was not to be disregarded. He came to me afterwards to have some confidential conversation about an important matter; I gave my opinion, clearly and firmly. I told him in relation to it: 'I would not recede an inch.' 'Nor I, Mr. Miner,' said he. So I was glad we agreed. * * * I had business with the Postmaster General to-day, I wanted a new post-office created, and a friend appointed post-master. There were several gentlemen in, and I told Mr. McLean I would leave the application for his consideration. 'Oh, no,' said he, putting everything else aside; 'I will attend to it immediately.' He did so, and made the appointment before I left him. This for you. It was not so when I came here, my lady! So I talk of self, self."

*See letter of March 29, 1826.

There are very few letters of the short session of 1827, and they hardly refer to public work at all; the reports of the House show Mr. Miner taking an interest in public buildings, relief for sufferers by fire in Alexandria, etc., and opposing an ill-digested bill for the grant of canal lands to Illinois in which he brought out the present Panama toll question; Shall the United States build a canal, and pay toll indefinitely for the use of it? But a letter written to him very soon after the close of this session has more than passing interest:

"STATE DEPARTMENT,
"WASHINGTON, March 28th, 1827.

"Dear Sir: Yours of the 22nd instant has been duly received. My best exertions shall be devoted to merit your good opinion, and the many kindnesses you have lavished upon me, as well as to justify the choice made by the Secretary. Mr. Clay treats me with a politeness, consideration, friendship and confidence which is highly flattering, although recognized as almost entirely owing to the warm recommendation which you have been pleased to give me. I am very much in company with the Secretary, and believe I am daily gaining ground in his good opinion. * * *

"Yours Respectfully,
"W. S. DERRICK."

Two years later is another letter from the same hand, showing that in Mr. Clay's case, at least, a man may be a hero to one in almost as close connection as his valet.

[Washington, 12 March, 1829.]

"Mr. Clay and his family intend to leave Washington tomorrow evening or Saturday morning, for Baltimore, on their way home to Kentucky. He will of course, be much delayed by dinner invitations and bad roads, and will hardly get to Ashland in less than a month. God speed him! The good wishes of thousands of his fellow citizens attend him. As a statesman—as an orator—as a patriot—as a man—he leaves not a peer behind."—W. S. D.

[January 13, 1827.]

"I think I confine myself too much and study too much; I have nowhere to go where there is heart; and for these great parties, they have very little pleasure for me; but I think I am gaining knowledge that may be useful. The prudence, if I may say so, of last year, has given me on our committee all the consideration I desire. We meet twice a week and do a good deal of business. I ought to be happy, but without you I cannot be and am not. I don't know that that is strange; why should it be? that as I grow older I seem to feel that you are nearer to my heart and necessary to my happiness more than ever."

[January 21, 1827.]

"I had a letter from James Sinton to-day; he wished me to obtain for Mr. Sitgreave's son a berth in the West Point Academy. I will if I can; the applications to me to aid in getting offices are numerous."

[January 24, 1827.]

"Being dressed, and Judge Clark, and Mr. Williams both saying I should go, I went up to Mr. Clay's party. It was full and pleasant; cotillions and waltzing up stairs, whist and wine below. The young ladies were neatly dressed, their hair all put up with wreaths of roses, lilies and wheat. The whirligig waltzing I did not like, but they did. The English beau with mustachios whirled them around at a great rate; they say he catches hold of their dresses behind and rumples them too roughly. The English Minister, French, Danish, Mr. Biddle, President of the U. S. Bank; the Postmaster General, Secretary of War, Judges Johnson, Story and Trimble of the Supreme Court, Mr. Webster and others were there. Wine, punch, coffee, tea, and cakes were handed around. I took a single cup of coffee, nothing more. * * * I dined at Mr. Giles' a few days ago, so was not at the party given last night. I now mention it for an odd circumstance. Mrs. Estill, wife of Mr. Estill of Virginia, has a baby since being here last winter, and it was

christened at Mr. Giles' last night, and the British Minister stood godfather, and made it a present of a breastpin. Some of our backwoods folks don't like it very well, the christening and dancing all together; but if both are innocent I don't see much harm in their going together. Yet on recollection one is a solemn dedication to God, and hardly a proper ceremony for a ballroom. * * * Mr. Clay as he saw I was going came and took me by both hands and mentioned his desires * * * with some kind expressions. This is nothing to *me* but I tell you everything. This letter of course is for the family only."

[January 27, 1827.]

"To-day, having received a special note to visit Secretary Rush, I went up at 11 to the office and sat an hour. He is as much of an enthusiast about silk as I am. With the advice of President Adams he has, besides obtaining all the information possible in this country, sent to our minister and agents in London, Paris, Italy and elsewhere in Europe for books and all the facts that could be obtained. He took me into the library to show me what books he had got. His report will not be ready before next session, but he is making every exertion to render it useful to the nation, the subject, and his own fame and character; all which I very much approve, and confidently hope something valuable may grow out of it."

[February 1, 1827.]

"It is my birth-night. I am 47 years of age. This morning I returned thanks and prayed devoutly, humbly and sincerely, I hope acceptably, to our Heavenly Father. Many blessings has he showered upon me, and permit me to say, no one for which I am more deeply grateful than the bringing me to your love and your bosom. 'We clim'd the hill thegither' and will totter down hand in hand, I trust, in increased love, respect, kindness, affection. * * * I love you dearer than anything else on earth. Had I come

here ten years earlier I do think I might have been distinguished. As it is, I trust I am respectable, as much as my friends had any reason to expect. I pray God to bless you and the children and all of us. May my heart be grateful."

[January 12, 1828.]

"I entered into close, pretty solemn discussion with Mr. Sprague of Maine, one of the very first men in our House, on the same subject that I had the serious conversation with Mr. Everett this morning. They are both wrong, or I am, and I don't believe I am. My hope is to prevent their speaking in favor of the D'Auterive negro claims. Both are prepared to speak. I have given my reasons to them for rejecting the claim. Time only can determine whether my argument avail with them."

Time disappointed Mr. Miner for Mr. Everett spoke in favor of the claim of Marigny D'Auterive for payment for a slave of his killed in government service; Mr. Sprague seems not to have taken any part in the debates. Mr. Miner spoke on this claim on February 7, 1828, and on February 25, 1828. He opposed it chiefly on two grounds: it was unfair to the free man who might be killed in government service, whose family could get no pay; and the government had power over all men, slave and free, in time of need. Mr. Brent in reply made an anti-slavery argument out of these speeches, saying if these "ideas were ever generally entertained by the House, Southerners would return to their constituents and by their sides meet such arguments the only way they should be met," and again: "He [Mr. Miner] asserts—what no man has done before him—that the government has a right to enlist our slaves * * * without compensation for their services * * * and then says he does not wish to interfere with our rights to our slaves," etc. The bill was recommitted to the committee of claims and not heard of again.

[January 29, 1828.]

"I think with you, as in matters of taste I am proud to do, that the 'Red Rover' is better than the 'Chronicles of the Cannongate.' I am glad if they have afforded you pleasure."

It was his custom to leave a standing order for new books of significance with a bookseller in Philadelphia; and his children always remembered their keen delight when the books were opened, and he or their grandfather, Joseph Wright, read the last "Waverly" to the gathered family. They read so much and so wisely to the blind daughter, Sarah, that she became an educated woman. His daughter Ellen often spoke of this reading aloud together as one of the chief family pleasures, and the tired mother, after all the rest were sleeping, would sit and read far into the night. Sometimes she would speak of their reading; in a letter of an earlier date she says: "The bookseller has never sent the Annals of the Parish, they were not to be had, but we do very well without them. We have history and poetry and many very interesting books to read. I found a small volume of Littleton's letters in the bookcase which were read with great pleasure. I thought them excellent and was speaking of them and inquiring how they came to be published, when I was told they were not genuine letters but all a fiction. Now can you tell me if that was the case? However they are well written let who will write them." Again she paints a pretty picture of the home life he so often longed for: "Charlotte is well enough to be playing chess with her Cousin Sarah M. in one corner; Cousin S. B. is reading Robertson's Scotland in the other. Sarah, our Sarah, is knitting Williams Mittens; Mary sits by our side knitting a pair of stockings, Grandfather is blowing the fire, and Ellen is nursing Frisk. William says 'What will you say about me?' I tell him nothing good if he makes so much noise, but he is a pretty good boy and delighted that he is thought of consequence enough to write letters to his dear father, and to receive answers to them."

[February 11, 1828.]

"Our silk report is, to-day, ordered to be printed—6,000 copies. The chairman, Gen. Van Renssellaer, referred the report of the committee to me, before he offered it to the House, and I approved. It will be valuable, and I shall have some credit for it, and really fondly hope not to have been here wholly in vain." This letter shows that the statement found in two places that he wrote the report is a mistake.

[February 12, 1828.]

"The people have a right to my services, if they choose to command them, aye, to my life, cheerfully. I am their servant, as they have been my friend. But to you and Joseph, I say confidentially, I have great doubt whether our ticket, in the present disturbed state of parties, can be elected. I should hate to fail, and am quite willing to retire with character and applause, rather than be run out. This is not, however, to be breathed beyond you two and the Doctor. I conceal nothing from Joseph and the Doctor. My heart is open to them as to myself. Write me what you think exactly. I will be guided by you. I can produce a powerful impression if I set out. Had I best? or better look to our Luzerne lands and try to make the children independent?"

[February 26, 1828.]

"I write you to-day a hasty note. I am not in the letter-writing humour, but can't let the mail go without dropping you a line. I received yesterday a most friendly and kind letter from Mr. Pennypacker (formerly in the Assembly with me). He urges me to be a candidate again; greatly overrates my merits, etc. I have not yet replied, but, my dear Lete, my most solemn impressions are that I ought not. I do not wish to. Then, it is true, there are moments when it seems as if it would be pleasant. Should I not, I am sensible there will be moments when I should wish it were otherwise. Still, my steady prevailing opinion is that

my *interest* and my *credit* both require me to retire, while I can retire, with a fair name and the public good-will. Character may be useful to me and you and the children hereafter, and I should husband it. No money is to be made here. (Mr. Randolph has just come in, not having been here before for a fortnight.) The demand for cash is constant, and can't be set aside. I sacrifice a great deal in my business at home, I neglect much. I am from my family, and have no countervailing pleasure here. It is perfectly fair some other Federalist should have a chance to come. I shall gain no further favour here. My want of hearing daily increases; prevents my entering into debate with ease, and shuts me out from social converse. Is it not best to retire while I can do so, *well?* Why wait, at the utmost two winters more, and then be obliged to retire? In the meantime I lose many friends, and I risk being run out, for really I consider the result doubtful. Buchanan is really a strong man, and much as we differ on the presidential question, I should be sorry to see him out of Congress. This to your private ear. I am in solemn earnest. I stand well,—very well, now. The higher offices do not open to me. Such are my thoughts. I spoke yesterday about an hour, wanting five minutes of it. My own opinion is that I presented a strong constitutional argument on the power of the Government to make internal improvements. You must judge; it will be out in a day or two."

With regard to this speech his wife wrote, March 14th, 1828, what must have struck any one on reading the speeches of the time: "I have been reading your speech on internal improvements again and am much pleased with it. There is one thing I notice in your speeches that is not always to be seen in others, you never lose sight of the subject but seem to understand exactly what you are saying. Your speech is a matter of fact one and carries conviction with it."

"HOUSE REPS., March 24, 1828.

"MY DEAR LETITIA:

"It seems that we must postpone the pleasure of meeting until after Congress shall rise. Day after day brings with it new subjects of interest which cannot be so long left as the time it would take to come home—dear home, sweetest spot on earth, to me. * * * I love you all dearly—you best and dearest—Ann, the Dr. and little Miss Caroline, Sarah, sensible, good, dear Sarah—Mary and Joseph, who I feel toward as a son—Charlotte—Ellen—William—Father—and Asher's family, are all dear to me. I have gratifications here, but many privations. It has been pleasant to be here. It is pleasant, but except the personal gratification I see no great use in it. What hope is there beyond? If my hearing was perfect and I could look with fair hope to distinction, O, I would make a noble effort. That is hopeless. Very well. Let a man know when he ought to be satisfied. Now give me independence, let me get out of debt. Let me make home pleasant, if I live, to enjoy—if I die—for those who are dear to me—that's my feeling—such are my opinions; and I earnestly hope to be saved from what I deliberately deem the folly of trying to come back again. * * * I am writing in the midst of business. This morning I presented a petition from this District containing more than 1,000 names in favour of the abolition of slavery here. Joseph's letter came yesterday; he says you are gardening. Let plenty of peas and potatoes be put in for ourselves and the Doctor and Joseph. We have a great caravan of wild beasts here; tell Sarah the little monkey is among them and the pony, and three noble lions."

After this date there are very few letters, and in those that do remain the absence of any echoes of the rancors of the time, noteworthy, perhaps even in Washington, for its bitterness, suggests the thought that they may have been destroyed with special care. During the recess between the first and second sessions of the twentieth Congress Governor Metcalfe of Kentucky, wrote him a letter interesting

enough to be interpolated here—later, after the 1829 anti-slavery speech, Governor Metcalfe wrote him another sympathetic, congratulatory letter—

"FRANKFORT, KY., 14th Oct., 1828.

"I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt just now of your letter of the 3rd inst—not the formal expression of the term merely, but a most sincere and heartfelt *pleasure,* springing from recollections which it will be my delight to cherish through all the vicissitudes of life. For permit me to tell you, that among all my fellow sojourners here, with whom I have been thrown, either by accident or design, it would be hard for me to single out the man whose hold upon my affections, is as strong as that of the Honorable Charles Miner. * * * Stand up; thou firm and steadfast patriot—stand—and continue to love thy country more than thyself, worthy as thou art of the love of those who know thee best.

"THOMAS METCALFE."

,"Washington, Thursday night, after 9; Dec. 11, 1828."

"MY DEAR LETITIA:

"I meant to write
A long letter to-night,
But you'll have to take up with a short one.

"Why that isn't very good poetry—Thank you for your letter yesterday. I did kiss the name; * * * Dressed up to-day, Madam, in my best bib and tucker, had my hair cut, and waited on Mr. Adams. I found him alone, went through my business, and finding him disposed to be uncommonly sociable I sat near an hour. He threw off all reserve; the conversation became animated and interesting. Finding himself going far, he said: 'But, this, Mr. Miner, is to be understood as entirely confidential,' etc. So, Madam, you cannot at present know anything of the matter. Joseph, the Doctor, and Asher alone are to know that I have said even so much. Do you smile at seeing the little

gray-headed fellow that takes your arm to go and feed the chickens, sitting in the palace in confidential conversation with the President? * * * I have been reading 'Pelham,' a new novel. You shall have it; there is love, two duels, a rape, a murder, much of fashionable high and low life, much wit, a great deal of learning, and some prosing. Will you read it?"

[December 11, 1828. "Miner asked me if I had determined definitely to withdraw from all public service after the expiration of my present term—I told him that my intention was absolute and total retirement. But my principle would be what it had been through life. * * * It was not for me to foresee whether my services would ever be desired by my fellow-citizens again. If they should call for them, I should not feel myself at liberty to decline repairing to any station which they might assign me to, except for reasonable cause. But I desired him to receive this in confidence as a candid answer to his question, for I wish not even to give a hint to the public that I am yet eligible to their service." *Memoirs* of John Quincy Adams, Vol. 8, p. 81.]

For the reasons stated in the letters of February 12 and 26, 1828,—chiefly his increasing deafness—Mr. Miner declined to run again, and returned to West Chester in March of the following year. He added to his other elements of power a thing by no means common to humanity; knowing when to stop.

His wife's opinion on this subject had been clear, though her patience for four years, away from him and even the slightest connection with Washington society, had proved that she was not unwilling to do her part toward her husband's success. She wrote from "Spring Grove," their West Chester home, March 8, 1828: "You must not be a candidate at the next election; I am tired of keeping house alone, now the farm requires so much attention; and you know I have neither health nor taste for farming, so you must stay at home."

Mr. Miner, in Washington, had speedily shown an unusual power of winning and retaining the regard and confidence of the leaders, especially, of course, the men of the administration, with whom he was most closely brought. Correspondent after correspondent, for the rest of his life, wrote him with hearty esteem, and desire to elicit his opinion. President Adams' letters, during and after his presidential term, were intimately personal, and of a length that would seem surprising in these days of hurried dictation, did we not know their writer's habit of living with pen in hand. Not often does one receive from a president of the United States an estimate of the character of another president, his father; but such was contained in the letter John Quincy Adams wrote Mr. Miner (who had written a note of condolence after John Adams' death) from Quincy, July 31, 1826:

"My grateful acknowledgments are due to you for your very feeling and friendly letter of 16 July, the sentiments, contained in which are alike patriotic and philosophical. My father's character as a public man has long been before his country and before the world—much and grossly misrepresented, and not perhaps yet correctly understood. A disposition to do justice to it has however gained strength, and will I have no doubt in a few years survive all controversy. What he was in the concerns of private and domestic life is of course known to few—to none more intimately than to me—and has given a pungency to the misfortunes sustained by his loss, which the heart of an affectionate son can alone conceive. Yet even to the sentiments of filial gratitude, the circumstances of his decease are consolatory. With a body so decayed that 'dying all he could resign was breath,' it is soothing to know that he did not survive his intellectual faculties an hour—that the day of his death seemed as if selected by Providence to stamp upon his country the memory of his life, and that his

spirit took its flight, hand in hand with that of his great co-patriot, rival and friend, to regions where patriotism and friendship may still contribute to the joys of existence, and where we may humbly hope that rivalry will have no place.

"With my cordial thanks, accept my respectful and friendly salutations.

"JOHN QUINCY ADAMS."

With Daniel Webster Mr. Miner's relations, as his own letters have repeatedly shown, were also most cordial; and here, as elsewhere, it seems strange that a man who was only four years in public life, should so have retained the intimate affection of those left in the hurly-burly. Mr. Webster wrote from Philadelphia, March 24, 1827:

"Your acquaintance and regard are valued by me most highly, and I trust we may be mutually useful to each other. * * * Do not fail to expose that abominable job, the Missouri business. See that the public know all about it."

New Year's 1830, Mr. Miner wrote a rhymed "carrier's address" of the sort that remained in vogue as late as the sixties, eliciting from Mr. Webster a pleasant acknowledgment:

"Your muse is happy, and the verse flows easy. The oftener I hear from you, in any way, the more gratified I shall be."

A portrait of Webster, given to Mr. Miner with the autograph inscription, "To my highly valued friend, the Hon. Charles Miner," remains in the possession of the family.

From Washington, January 30, 1847, Mr. Webster wrote: "I can only thank you for the kind things you say of me in your address of the 4th of December, and for that steady friendship you have manifested from our first acquaintance. It does me good to think of you, to cherish your regard, and to remember our ancient intercourse. It would do me still more good to be useful to you, in any way in my power."

And later, within the shadows of the great statesman's disappointment and death, he sent to Mr. Miner his most affectionate remembrances. Mrs. Sarah Hollenback Butler, of Wilkes-Barre, was in Washington in March, 1850, and met Webster. "It was incidentally mentioned," wrote she to Mr. Miner, "that I was from the valley of Wyoming. 'Indeed, said he, 'well, pray, madam, tell me if you are acquainted with my old friend, Charles Miner?' You may imagine my delight in being able to say that you were one of my earliest and best friends. He seemed very much pleased; asked many questions, and showed the liveliest interest in everything relating to you. At the close he said: 'Well, now, my dear madam, I want you to get Mr. Butler to write to him *to-morrow,* and tell him he is one of the few in the world that I love to think about. Tell him (more impressively) that I *love* to think about him."

A remarkable illustration of his power of eliciting and deserving the most intimate confidences from the leaders of American public life is shown in the following letter from Richard Rush—at various times controller of the treasury, United States attorney-general, secretary of state *pro tempore,* minister to England and France, and secretary of the treasury under John Quincy Adams, during Mr. Miner's congressional term. The letter is marked "private," but may legitimately be printed, eighty-five years after it was written, as a contribution to political history:

"WASHINGTON, June 7, 1828.

"I cannot budge from Washington, much as I should like to visit Pennsylvania; no, here I am, tied by the foot, and here must remain until the scene is over. My service in the Treasury has been peculiarly severe. It is admitted by all that its business is never of a light kind. Its investigations, its calculations, its anticipations, its decisions, always imply labor. The mind cannot doze over them. It must dive into them seriously and in earnest, and wo be to

him who makes mistakes. Nothing but constant, intense thought will ever carry a man through the business of the Treasury. There is no help or hope for him otherwise. And under what circumstances did I come to this business? After an interval of seven years passed in our foreign service. To all Treasury business I had necessarily become, I may say, a total stranger. It is too exact, too minute, too technical in its nature ever to be followed up by a citizen who is abroad, and anxiously engaged while abroad in other duties of high moment to his country. Besides, our country is perpetually going forward in its home affairs. The crescent principle is astonishingly active. Every night, when the sun sets, we have grown somewhat larger as a nation than we were when it rose in the morning. To those who are on the spot it is easy to keep up with the daily increase; but think of taking seven years' accumulation suddenly, and having to manage it all, off-hand, under the heaviest official responsibilities! During the time I was away a multitude of new laws had passed—respecting the public lands, the customs, and an endless variety of subjects bearing upon the finances, with all of which I had to make myself acquainted, whilst the daily current of new business was at the same time pressing upon me, for that would never stop for an instant. I had no time to rest, scarcely any to sleep, to breathe. Leeway was only to be made up by working at extra hours, and how were these to be rescued from the everlasting calls of accruing business? Moreover, I found the department, into the midst of which I was plunged, half filled with worn-out incumbents, which is the case still. These are some of the difficulties I had to face. It has been my fortune not to have been crushed by them, and I have even the satisfaction of reflecting that up to this point of time there have been no financial embarrassments of any kind, during the period that I have been charged with directing this part of our public affairs. But I have had my trials. I have suffered in body and in mind; the

sufferings of the latter have been the sharpest. I complain not, always foolish in public men; but only state facts. After my first report I was arraigned, in effect, before the nation, for imputed mistakes, to the amount of millions and millions. I had no name, however poor, in this difficult and trying branch of our affairs, to cover me as with a temporary shield. Those who assailed me had. I was reviled, scoffed at. Would the South have left one of her sons so unprotected? I had to live for a long year under the agony of suspended reputation. Time came to my relief. It fixed the mistakes on those who assailed me as I said and knew from the beginning that it would. But I had no state to stand up for me and see fair play in the interim.

After adding, at length and with the bitterness of a wounded spirit, that he had even been criticised as being "no Pennsylvanian," though he had never been out of the state save on public business; and declaring that such treatment would not have come to one from the South, the West or the North, he averred that time had brought his vindication, official and other, and closed: * * * "Whilst on this head I will barely add, that the finance committee of the senate, at the session that has just passed (General S. Smith of Maryland chairman), made a report, in the course of which all the important doctrines upon which I have practised touching the public debt, and the sinking fund act, are confirmed, though they were much attacked at first.

"My dear sir, it is your kind and friendly letter of the 4th instant, just received, that draws from me; in the fullness of feeling, such remarks as the preceding. Perhaps I ought not to make them, but as they have come from me I will not recall them. There are indeed many grounds on which, if I be rejected by my state, in comparison with others I well know that I should have no right to utter complaint; but to be rejected as being no Pennsylvanian—would not this be a hard fate? I have simply unbosomed

myself under your letter, and will say no more on the subject, being always sensible, my dear friend, of your kindness and friendship, and tendering you a full reciprocation of all such feelings.

"RICHARD RUSH."

Back in West Chester Mr. Miner continued his correspondence with his old Washington friends. The following [February 19, 1830], from Senator Peleg Sprague of Maine, with whom he had so frankly disagreed on the slavery question, gives a near glimpse of the great Webster-Hayne struggle:

"The debate between Mr. Webster and Mr. Hayne seems to have attracted very much of the public attention. It was indeed a very extraordinary discussion, and produced a greater sensation here than any other I have witnessed. As to the comparative ability of the two champions, you know them and can judge. They both maintained their reputation, and increased it. Nothing can be more false than those representations which have been made by certain letter-writers who would throw Mr. Webster into the shade. The only comparison which can be made between Mr. Webster and Mr. Hayne was that which exists between a giant and a man of common strength."

Jackson's stormy reign had begun; and his veto of the bill chartering the United States Bank was shaking the politics of the country from top to bottom. Ex-President Adams, from his retirement in Quincy, looked at the storm with the eye of an experienced observer; and in his letter to Mr. Miner of October 11, 1830, gave to his correspondent—as now to the readers of this biography—a review of his own administration:

"QUINCY, 11 Oct. 1830.

"Your very friendly letter of the 19th ulto. with the number of the Village Record containing the analysis of the Veto Message has been duly received and has given me great pleasure. The suffrage of so near, so close and so

impartial an observer as you were at the commencement of the last Administration, is of itself worth a multitude of others; and if, in the progress of the four years while it continued the impartiality was merged in the sentence of a candid and benevolent judgment, your voice is not the less precious in my estimation, for the kind feeling by which it is prompted at present.

"For the judgment of Posterity upon the Acts and policy of the last Administration, so far as Posterity will take cognizance of them, I never felt any concern—it was marked by no signal Event, nor was an opportunity afforded me of conferring upon the Nation any benefit which by its magnitude would commend itself to the memory of the ages. Such an opportunity would have required the concurrence of others, which, from what ever motive was with held, and as Posterity takes little account of good merely intended for, but not enjoyed by them, I do not promise myself much of their Gratitude or even of their Remembrance. My name will hold its place in our future Fasti Consulares, but no Appian way, or Column of Trajan or Arch of Titus, will exhibit to the eyes of men in future Times, its achievements: and disposed as I am to look before as well as after, with an eye rather of philosophy than of Ambition, I content myself with the slender portion of regard which may be yielded to barren good Intentions, and aspirations beyond the Temper of the Age, leaving the Temple of the Winds, or the Needle of Cleopatra, as more suitable monuments to commemorate the virtues of my Successors.

"Your Analysis of the Message has detected its concealments, and simplified its duplicities—Internal improvement and domestic Industry must hang their harps upon the willows—I lament their discomfiture, and live in the hope of their restoration—The glory that consists in repressing the energies of the Country directed to the bettering of its condition cannot last.

"The population dwelling South of Mason and Dixon line, will naturally and perhaps necessarily always vote for one of themselves to fill the Chair of State—So it will be hereafter, as it has been heretofore. This is constitutional right; and they cannot be censured for the exercise of it. The North is more accommodating; and will bear all things for the sake of the Union—

"But it is time for us to look a little abroad again—The affairs of Europe are re-assuming an aspect of deep interest—The wheel of Political dominion is not satisfied with one entire turn—It is again in motion—can you tell us when and where it will stop? Talleyrand said that the Restoration of the Bourbons was the beginning of the end—Was it not rather the end of the beginning?

"I wish Pennsylvania may be so well represented in the Senate of the Union as your expectation forebodes—and I should rejoice to see your own seat in the Capitol resumed—but there or elsewhere be assured of the respect and regard of your friend,

"J. Q. Adams."

Edward Everett agreed with Mr. Adams in his detestation of Jackson's veto and admiration of Mr. Miner's scarification of it. From Charlestown he wrote on October 22, 1830:

"My dear Friend (if you will permit me so to call you):

"You wrote me a kind letter at Washington last winter, which I fear I have not answered; and you sent me the other day your paper containing your dissection of the Veto. How could a man of your mildness commit such a murder as you have done of that innocent and guileless thing? Seriously, it is the ablest comment, with the exception of Mr. Clay's (and that is not abler) which has appeared on this renowned paper. * * * I see Stewart is back. Would that you were."

Even more significant was ex-Secretary Rush's statement, as from an experienced authority, that Jackson knew

nothing about banking but had probably been mistaught by Van Buren. He wrote to Mr. Miner from York, January 5, 1831:

"Since the President's second attack on the bank (a subject that he really does not understand, but in regard to which he is probably misled by Mr. Van Buren) the subject has acquired fresh interest. I have even received letters from Europe, expressing apprehensions for its fate; particularly from England, within a few days, where much of the stock is held. These letters are of course dated before the knowledge of this second demonstration by the head of the government had arrived, but under fears of it. * * *

"Whilst I was in the Treasury my attention was necessarily and officially called, I may say almost daily for four years, to the operations of this institution; and I felt it a duty to bear my official testimony to Congress and the nation of its utility. This I did in my last annual report, in which I endeavored to present, in a form as condensed and intelligible as possible, its most important benefits to the financial operations of the country. As always,

"Sincerely and affectionately yours,

"Richard Rush."

Later, in this same year 1831, the Anti-Masonic excitement was adding fuel to the political flame; and if the excitement quickly burned out, it was, like brushwood, all the hotter while it lasted. William Morgan, accused of divulging masonic secrets, had mysteriously disappeared; and the critics and enemies of the order accused it of spiriting him away and murdering him. The charge was heatedly and often denied, but the battle was on, with such fury as materially to affect the field of national politics. Sincerely attached to his lodge, and deeming the widely current attacks on the Masons without justification in sober reason, Mr. Miner deplored and withstood the agitation opposed to the order—and yet with sobriety. John Quincy

Adams as earnestly espoused the other side. Here, however, as before, Mr. Miner was confidentially consulted, or cordially written to, by political foes as well as friends. Daniel Webster, looking at the strife dispassionately but anxiously from afar, wrote him at length from Boston, August 28, 1831:

"I wish I could say anything encouraging on the highly important subjects mentioned in your letter of the 20th.

"The Kentucky election has not turned out to be quite as bad as it appeared to be, at the date of your letter, but still it is unsatisfactory, and has produced an unfavorable impression in this quarter. Speaking to you in the most confidential manner, I must say that I concur with you in the opinion that there is very little chance of electing Mr. Clay. I believe we may hope for the vote of Kentucky yet, but even with that I do not perceive where we are to find enough others to make a majority. My private impression is, there is but one chance to save the country from further and worse misrule, and that is to bring forward some man in whose favor the National Republicans and Anti-Masons of Pennsylvania and New York could be induced to unite, so as to secure the votes of those states. With them, Ohio, New England, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland would be able to elect a President. But I fear there is very little prospect of finding such a candidate.

"You say that you believe the Anti-Masons are intent on pushing Judge M [McLean]. It will never do; our friends in New England and else where will never be brought to support him. As against him the election of Gen'l Jackson would be certain.

"A gentleman writing from Philadelphia says: 'Let us put up a candidate, if we make a change, in whom we have perfect confidence, and if we fail, still a minority united on principle, and with a sound head, is better security to the country, than success in behalf of moderate talents or doubtful principles.' I agree to all this; at the same time that I

see the difficulty of finding the man. I confess I do not know him. You are pleased to say that I possess a portion of the confidence of the conflicting parties. Perhaps it may be so, but I cannot think the country is inclined to bring me forward, and it is certain that I shall do nothing to bring myself forward. I have little experience in public affairs, and have not been long enough before the country to produce great general confidence. My only merit is an ardent attachment to the country and the constitution of Government, and I am already more than paid for all my efforts, if you and other good men think I have done any thing to defend the Constitution and promote the welfare of the country. In the favor which those efforts have attracted towards me, I see promise of a real, substantial, fixed attachment among the people to the Constitution. The great body of the community is quite sound on that point. And that is the feeling which we ought to cultivate, and on which we must rely. If we bring about a change it will be done by us as a Union party.

"And now, my dear sir, will you tell me whether in your judgment, there is any individual, who could so unite the Anti-Masons and National Republican voters of Pennsylvania as to carry the state against Gen'l Jackson? I should like much to know your present impression on that vital question.

"The Anti-Masonic Convention at Baltimore will have a most responsible part to act. The prosperity of the country, perhaps the fate of its Government, hangs on their decision. God give them true wisdom, and disinterested patriotism.

"I shall be glad to hear from you at your earliest leisure.

"Yours truly,

"D. WEBSTER.

"You will of course consider this letter in the strictest sense confidential."

In this correspondence it is obvious that Masons and

Anti-Masons were at that time, at least, united in their desire to beat Jackson.

Three months later the same absorbing theme, among others, was dwelt upon by Mr. Adams in what is, in some respects, the most interesting letter in all the interesting Charles Miner correspondence. John Quincy Adams, though there have been plenty of book-makers among our presidents, was the only poet in the list; and his verses to Mr. Miner are not only a remarkable indication of complete impartiality and implicit trust in his political integrity, but in themselves a neatly-turned literary product of the old-fashioned Horatian order, derived from a sound, classical training. Those were the days when our colleges had no boilershop adjuncts or courses in retail shoe-selling; and Mr. Adams, it will be remembered, was an ex-professor of rhetoric:

"QUINCY, 18th Oct., 1831.

"DEAR SIR: "It is perhaps a puzzling question of minor morals to determine how much of the pleasure which we derive from the applause of our friends, or of the world, is to be set down to the account of vanity, and how much to the honest love of praise. These are very different things, and yet I fear are very apt to run into one another.

"Mrs. Thrale tells us that Dr. Johnson was delighted more than beseemed a philosopher, at a compliment from a gentleman, who, upon seeing him upon horseback, declared he rode as well as the most illiterate jockey in England. Something akin to this I have experienced from the notice in your letter of the Psalm annexed to my Anti-Nullification 4th of July discourse, and of the Hymn at the close of the Eulogy; but of the high praise with which you honour them, the larger half belongs to another. The Hymn was not written by me, nor do I know the author. It was probably Dr. Doane, the respectable Episcopal clergyman who read the prayers, and composed the long one, which was much admired. The Psalm was one of a number at leisure

hours versified by me, and which I gave to be sung by the Choir, deeming it appropriate to the occasion.

"But to the numerous friends to whom I sent copies of the Oration, many have in return expressed hearty concurrence in its opinions, and very flattering appreciation of its principles. You alone have spoken of the Psalm, and the variety of applause from the 'biforked hill' has given an unusual value to yours. I have in the course of my life wasted so much of my time in the composition of rhyme as to have acquired some facility in tacking syllables together. I have chiefly confined myself to translations, with-now and then a few original lines for a young lady's album —or such as those herewith enclosed, which, as they happen to please or displease you, may be put upon the file or in the fire.

"I am much indebted to you for a copy of your printed Speech upon internal improvements, enclosed with your letter. There must be some mistake with regard to the Tract published during the sitting of the Convention of 1787, and from which the extract in your speech is given. You will observe in the Eulogy, page 45, notice of a letter addressed by Mr. Monroe to his constituents, after he had been elected to the State Convention, which was to decide upon the Constitution of the United States, and before the Convention met. The statement that this letter was imperfectly printed, and that he sent a copy of it, among others, to Mr. Jefferson, is made in the Eulogy upon the authority of a manuscript of autobiography in Mr. Monroe's own hand writing furnished me by Mr. Gouverneur, since his decease. In that letter he says he stated his objections to the Constitution, which he afterwards set forth more at large by speeches in the State Convention. There he voted against the adoption of the Constitution, though he would have been willing to accept it with previous amendments. In the manuscript to which I have alluded not a word is said of any tract published while the General Convention

was in session. If therefore the Tract to which you refer was written by Mr. Monroe, it must be the same address to his constituents, written after his election to the State Convention. I should not indeed have supposed that there was any period of his life at which he would have written of the state governments the sentence quoted in your speech—yet so it may have been. Mr. Madison had at that time quite a little respect for the state governments, and little did they deserve. A history of the Confederation from the Declaration of Independence to the 4th of March, 1789, would, as you have observed, be a most instructive moral and political discourse for the perusal of the people of the United States, but they would not read it. Who reads any portion of our history? Twenty editions of the Waverly Novels, in fifty volumes, would make as many fortunes for their printers before one thousand copies of a History of the United States could be sold, were it written with the pen of Cornelius Tacitus himself.

"With regard to the fiscal concerns of the States which compose our Confederation, including those of the colonial governments before the Revolution, my own information is exceedingly scanty. Whoever should trace them out, according to your suggestion, would make a very curious exhibition, and for aught I know, if he would give it the form of a novel and season it with crossings in love, great sayings, and impossible adventures, he might make it an interesting work.

"In 1652 the colonial government of Massachusetts Bay, upon their own authority, coined silver money. Whether it was high treason or state sovereignty might form the subject of a learned and ingenious historical dissertation. In Virginia and Maryland they did not coin silver but they turned tobacco leaves into pounds, shillings and pence, a metamorphosis, if not equal to any in Ovid, quite the reverse of that celebrated by Swift, of Ovid himself into waste paper. About the time of the South Sea schemes in

England, and Law's Mississippi gold mines in France, the General Court of Massachusetts Bay made a land bank, which swelled to as large a bubble, and shivered into as many imperceptable atoms of vapor when it burst, as those schemes of more notorious infamy. Paper money was always the besetting sin of Massachusetts Bay; and one of their greatest financiering achievements was an accurate adaptation of the decimal arithmetic by making their pound, lawful money, exactly equivalent to two shillings, or one-tenth of a pound sterling. If no other instruction could be derived from a history of colonial financiering, the pupil would be dull indeed who could not acquire from them some accomplishment in the art of committing national bankruptcy. Perhaps they might teach the better lesson to avoid it.

"While I was procrastinating the intention to answer your letter I received your short note with two of your electioneering papers; and since then I have received your republication of Mr. Wirt's Letter to the Anti-Masonic Convention at Baltimore, with your declaration and that of several of your masonic brethren, that you concur entirely with the sentiments of that letter. The definite object of the Anti-Masons in the United States is the abolition of the Institution. In consenting to be their candidate, Mr. Wirt approves this object, and the means by which they are avowedly endeavoring to accomplish it—that is, by acting upon popular elections. General Peter B. Porter and Mr. W. B. Rochester in New York have expressed the same opinion, by advising the surrender of the charters by the lodges. You have seen by my letter to Edward Ingersoll that this is more than I, Anti-Masonic as I am, would absolutely require, though I earnestly desire it and believe it the best course for the Masons to adopt, both for themselves and for their country. But that they should discard forever all oaths, penalties and secrets I deem indispensable, and

until that is accomplished I shall be a determined Anti-Mason. Although in my letters to Mr. Ingersoll I made repeated mention of your name, I did not anticipate that he would communicate them to you. I authorized him to show them to Mr. Walsh, because he had denounced me to the public as a madman for my anti-masonry. But if you, and Washington and others whom I love and revere, have taken the masonic oaths and bound yourselves by them I can only say

'There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple;
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with't.'

"A difference of opinion with you will always be to me a subject of regret, but will never impair the regard and esteem with which I am, Dear Sir,

"Your friend and servant

"J. Q. Adams."

Enclosed was the following poem which the family still have in Mr. Adams' handwriting:

"To Charles Miner, Esq., 18 October, 1831.

"Idem velle atque idem nolle, ea demum firma amicitia est. Catiline in Sallust.

"Amicus Socrates, Amicus Plato, sed magis Amica Veritas. Cicero.

"Say, brother, will thy heart maintain
The Roman's maxim still;
That nothing brightens Friendship's chain
Save Unity of Will.
Ah, no, Unhallowed was the thought;
From perjur'd lips it came,
With Treachery and with Falsehood fraught,
Not *Friendship's* sacred Flame.

"To *Roman* Virtue shall we turn
To kindle Friendship's fires?
From purer Sources let us learn
The Duties she requires.
To Tully's deathless page ascend.
The surest guide of Youth;
There we shall find him, Plato's Friend,
But *more* the friend of Truth.

"And thou to me, and I to thee
This maxim will apply:
And leaving Thought and Action free,
In Friendship live and die.
Be thine the Compass and the Square,
While I discard them both—
And thou shalt keep and I forbear,
The *Secret* and the *oath*."

To appreciate the full force of the feeling expressed in the letters and the poem, one must turn to Mr. Adams' historians and biographers; they vie with each other in stating his aloofness. Says Schouler: "He judged contemporaries harshly. Among men, great or small he had hardly an intimate friend"; to which James Freeman Clarke, in his "Anti-Slavery Days," adds "I suppose he was one of the most lonely men of his time * * * he was full of dislikes and distastes," etc. But still more must one read his anti-masonic papers and letters; it is a strong proof of his true greatness of character that he could so thoroughly hate the sin, and so heartily love the sinner.*

His friend, ex-Secretary Rush, another anti-mason, confidentially consulted Mr. Miner regarding the anti-masonic presidential nomination of 1832. Mr. Rush, writing from York, September 4, 1830, had advised no nomination, but

*See "Letters to Edward Livingston, Grand High Priest, published in 1834. In these Mr. Adams objected especially to the oath of secrecy and the use of God's name.

a resolution not to support Jackson. Afterward, as indicated in his letter of October 21, he accepted, as he later supported, William Wirt as the presidential nominee.

As the election of 1832 approached, came another letter from a politician still more deeply interested in the result:

"ASHLAND, August 25th, 1832.

"DEAR SIR: The Kentucky elections have terminated in the Jackson candidate for governor, by a majority of 1,260 votes, the Republican candidate for lieut.-gov. by a majority of 1,506 votes, and in 60 out of the 100 members that compose the house of representatives; also in securing in the senate, where the majority was against us last year, a majority of 22 out of the 28 members that compose that body.

"We have been so often mortified with the issue of elections in this state, that I do not know whether you will take any interest in the causes of our recent partial defeat. They were, 1st: the employment of extraordinary means by the Jackson party, within and without the state; on this point all the efforts were brought to bear, and every species of influence was exercised. The patronage and means of that party was profusely used. 2nd: an irruption of Tennessee voters, who came to the polls in some of our border counties. Last year official returns of all the voters in all the counties were made to form a basis for the practical adjustment of the ratio of our representatives. In some of the counties, at the recent election, I understand that the Jackson majority exceeded the whole number of the voters, according to those returns. * * *

"I remain always

"Faithfully your friend,

"C. Miner, Esq. "H. CLAY."

"P. S. Your own discretion will suggest to you the impropriety of the publication of this letter.

"H. C."

The same year, 1832, afforded another proof that Mr. Miner though in retirement was still looked to for help. In Bethania, Pennsylvania, was published in pamphlet form, by a body of men who wished to rouse and educate public spirit on the subject, "An Extract from a Speech in the House of Representatives in 1829 on the subject of Slavery and the Slave-trade in the District of Columbia, by Charles Miner; with notes."

This speech, the committee of publication stated, was unsatisfactory in its suggestion of *gradual* emancipation, but they chose it "on account of the author's personal knowledge." Mr. Miner himself notes that his speech on this republication was criticised as being too moderate to suit the temper of the time, which he himself had helped to create, but adds that at least it helped to spread information and arouse thought.

In 1832, also, he finally left West Chester and returned, for the rest of his days, to his wife's inherited farm at "Wrightsville," afterwards Plains Township and now Miner's Mills Borough, two miles and a half north of Wilkes-Barré. The unpopularity of masonry in Chester county may have had some influence toward the change; his deafness was an increasing trouble; and another reason was, as already given in a quoted letter as far back as 1828, to "look to our Luzerne lands and try to make the children independent," an ambition which he lived to see accomplished. The *Village Record* was sold to an employee on credit, which was met by payments in installments; and Asher was left free to follow his brother to the Wyoming Valley, which he did two years later.

That he was not forgotten in West Chester was pleasantly shown in 1835, when, revisiting the town, he was given a complimentary non-partisan dinner, and responded to the toast: "Our guest, the Hon. Charles Miner—as the public man we hail him for his services in promoting the interests and happiness of our beloved country; as a private citizen

we thank him for the example of his virtues; and he has our warmest wishes that his future years may be as happy as his past life has been useful and honorable."

A few words quoted by Mr. O. J. Harvey from a private letter show Mr. Miner was the same happy, helpful spirit in West Chester that he was everywhere else: "The young Yankee printer, ridiculed by the Democracy of Chester County as a 'Yankee tin peddler,' won his way to the esteem and confidence of the plain and practical Quakers, then, as now, powerful and influential in that old county. He was a popular man with young people, his kindly smile of recognition being long remembered, and the pure sentiments disseminated through the columns of his paper had a salutary effect in elevating the moral and intellectual tone of its readers." Again: "The *Village Record* was published for many years in a small frame building on High street near Gay. The personal appearance of Charles Miner in this office is well remembered, especially on publication days, when with a short apron of green baize or flannel he took an active part in issuing the *Record*—his kindly countenance and manner leaving a pleasant impression on the memory that more than half a century has not effaced. He was a genial and kind hearted man, very fond and considerate of the young."

In a letter to Mr. Miner written in 1847, Mr. Henry S. Evans, who took the *Village Record* on Mr. Miner's return to Wilkes-Barré in 1832, said concerning a new paper he, with others was about to start: "Now my honored friend we know that our fate depends upon *starting right*. That is impossible *without your aid* in our opinion. *We must have the aid of your pen*—as the only one that can place us in the position we covet. With the aid of your pen, a few weeks at least, and we have no fears. * * * Indeed to decline would destroy all our calculations." And in 1858 the editor of a collection of Chester county verse, wrote Mr. W. P. Miner: "We cannot get along without something

from Charles Miner; his name has been so long and honorably associated with the ramified interests of our county that we deem a contribution a *sine qua non.*"

Their blind daughter, Sarah, (of whom he writes, "cheerful, intelligent, her society was agreeable, and for myself, I may say, she has not only been an obedient daughter, but an agreeable companion, and faithful friend," and of whose poetry her family and friends were proud) has described their new home on the "Plains" in the cozy, low-browed cottage under the great sycamore that family tradition says was once the riding-switch of an ancestress, which still flourishes by the door:

MY HOME BENEATH THE SYCAMORE.

There is a lovely, lonely spot,
In thought I often wander o'er;
'Tis far away, an humble cot
My home beneath the Sycamore.

The stream glides there with murmuring sound,
Forgetful of the torrents roar,
And mountain winds sigh softly round
My home beneath the Sycamore.

With waving vines the trees are clad,
And blossoms yield their fragrant store,
And wild birds warble to make glad
My home beneath the Sycamore.

My father and my mother dwell,
Within that cot so shaded o'er;
No wonder that I love so well
My home beneath the Sycamore.

Here he loved to keep open house. In two day-books, combining diary and accounts, are many entries that show his happiness as host, and many other items of interest of

which just a few must be quoted, they are so full of character: The books cover the period from September, 1839, to May, 1853. Sandwiched in among minute statements of accounts, come notes showing the generous habit of the family; orders on Hibler and Yosts; Hollenback and Rutter's, Z. Bennetts', etc.; digging coal, selling coal lands, butchering, setting hens, hiring or discharging men; "Paid Jacob in coal," "Gave Sylvia an order on Hollenback"; "Sally Slaughback Cr when we killed and put up our meat."

August 28, 1840. "They charge 75 a rod [to dig a ditch] and find themselves. I agree to give it but think it not enough if they do well. It is left to me to say what more, or whether anything shall be paid."

December 19, 1844. "Letitia sent Mr. Sheppard a nice turkey, 2 b. buckwheat flour, a ton coal."

Christmas, 1844. "Roasted two nice turkeys Sister Thomasin, Cousin Eliza, Fuller and Charles Colte, E. Bowman Miner, Charles Miner dined with us. Wm. & Elizabeth sent 1 turkey to Mr. Clayton—1 to Mr. Dyer by Mrs. Ligget 1 to Mrs. Drake—Furnished 1 for Christmas dinner—4. Letitia sent 1 to Mr. Sheppard, the minister—1 to Mrs. Overton. I, 1 to Mr. Dorrance and we furnished 1 for Ch Dinner—4. Both families united sent 1 to Dr. Miner. I sent Rev. Mr. Dorrance a load of coal."

1846. "Memorandum: Have this fall given Mr. Rev. Moyster, order for ton coal at bed, sent him a ton to his house. Wm. gave him 2b buckwheat. Pair fowls. Sent load coal to Mr. M house. Ton to Mr. Sheppard. Hind quarter veal (excellent) 2 b oats. Beans. * * * Welcome but minuted for our satisfaction." In the midst of many entries like these one is not surprised to come on the following: "Finding that we have lived beyond our means, we all resolve to, cheerfully unite in retrenching our expenditures and practicing the strictest economy."

1840, May 13. "Christian took down a log to build the Log (political Harrison) Cabin."

September 24. "My esteemed son in law Jesse Thomas with his wife Ellen, daughter Sarah & their daughter little Anne came to visit us Sept. 19, exceedingly welcome."

1841, "Tuesday, March 16. * * * Yesterday, fair, good sleighing—at 11 a. m. Dear Asher was buried. He had been ill since Tuesday, the 2nd instant. It was of a disease of the heart as was supposed. On Sunday the 7th he had a stroke like Apoplexy, and from that time could not turn himself in bed, but suffered little pain, was cheerful, sometimes pleasant. On Saturday, 13, he grew rapidly worse. Then the pain about the region of the heart was severe—on our proposing to send for a doctor he said—'It will do no good, there is no relief but in Death,' and expired a little before 5 o'clock, March 13, 1841, Aged 63 years and 10 days, having been born March 3rd, 1778. * * * His beautiful and lovely daughter Mary was buried about a year ago with consumption; and his good daughter Sarah was buried with the same disease on Friday the 5th, only a few days before her father. Their house is indeed a house of affliction."

1841. "June: On Thursday about noon, 17th our dear cousin Helen, brother Asher's daughter, died of Consumption, and was buried on Saturday, a very large funeral. * * * This is the 4th funeral in that family within 18 months."

1842. "April 15: William P. Miner, after a five weeks absence at West Chester, returned with his wife, he having been married on Monday evening, April 11, to Miss Elizabeth D. Liggit." * * *

1844, Tuesday 16. "This is the anniversary of our wedding day, having been married Jany 16, 1804—40 years—Letitia then being 15 years, 7 months and 5 days old—Charles being 23 years, 11 months and 16 days. Lete born June 11, 1788; Charles born Feb. 1, 1780. We have been greatly helped by a kind superintending Providence. May

we have grateful hearts—pure and cheerful lives; and be ready cheerfully to go when our Divine Master shall call."

"1844, July 3, Professor [George] Ticknor of Boston and Professor Rogers here. Waited on them to the Monument. Mrs. Ticknor and 2 daughters along." [In a letter from Mr. Ticknor, dated July 25, 1844, he says: "I have been absent from home for the last two months, travelling in the interior of Pennsylvania and New York for Mrs. Ticknor's health."]

March 19, 1851. "I have been sick for 10 days—Yesterday Dr. Miner visited me. On Saturday night I was crying out with pain in my right breast. The old frame is nearly worn out. Dr. Miner said, "Not now, Uncle Charles; but when I do come and find the shades of death gathering and darkening upon you I will tell you."

April 16, 1852. "Letitia W. Miner—my dear—my tenderly loved wife for 48 years, departed this life Friday, February 27, 1852. Born June, 1788, she was 63 years and 8 months old.

"We were married January 16, 1804. She died of consumption, having been sick several months.

"She was of fine person—very handsome in early life—pure in mind—spotless in virtue, intelligent and of a fine literary taste."

August 13th, 1852.

"On Friday came Wm. Butler, Esq., and lady (our dear Letitia Thomas that was) and their lovely daughter, our great grandchild, their nurse and George and Mary Thomas, son and daughter of our son-in-law, Dr. Isaac Thomas, and Miss Mary Brinton that was, all cordially welcome. On Saturday evening came my nephew Charles Boswell, Esq., President of the Hartford Bank, rejoiced to see him. A time of as perfect enjoyment as human nature is capable of!"

October 16, 1852. "I was visited by Mr. Penn, G.

Grandson of Wm. Penn. He had called several weeks ago, with Judge Woodward and I was not at home. Social, pleasant, etc."

"NOVEMBER 27th, 1852.

"Thanksgiving Day. Had to dinner Mrs. Leggett, Mary Overton, Mary Hancock, Wm., Elizabeth and the children, Asher M. Stout, lady, nurse and children, Mrs. Julia Miner, Fuller, Charlotte and the 3 boys, Miss Abbott, Miss Searle and brother, Mrs. Adams and Mr. Abbott (her brother) Joseph W. Miner and Charles A. Miner. Had a turkey, young goose—pair of ducks—chicken pie and baked beans—boiled turkey and oyster sauce, mince pies (topping) apple pies, pudding, etc. Then from under our own roof tree we had grandmother Wright 84, myself 73, Sarah, our beloved grand-daughters Caroline D. Thomas and Lete M. Lewis, Jesse, Ellen, Lete, Isaac and the little ones. A delightful day and happy time."

A contribution to the Pittston *Gazette* gives an interesting picture: "* * * Young man! if you think you don't know anything, that written, will interest others, let me tell you what to do. Saddle up your horse some afternoon next week, or if you have no horse, go on foot through the mud—it will pay. Start from where you live, down the road or canal, it does not matter which. Keep your eyes well about you until you reach Sperring's old stand, upon the Plains. If you think then you have seen nothing worthy of thought, and of deep thought, too, turn down the cross road, by Captain Baily's, take first right turn, and the second house after you cross the bridge, (notice the beautiful view as you descend the hill). A low, neat snug cottage, with fine shade trees in front, is the 'Retreat.' Stop there, you have gone far enough. Go boldly to the door, knock and enter, ask if CHARLES MINER is at home. If he is, thank your stars—take the proffered welcome of a fine old gentleman, and a seat. You are at home. Don't be bashful—that is bad anywhere, but you will feel as little of it there as

at any place I know. If you are State born he knows your father or your grandfather, or if from North or East, he is sure to know those men of your county whose names have been familiar to you from childhood. After you are completely at your ease, perhaps he will say to you as he did to me once on a time when I called to pay my respects to a man whom all know, respect, and love—'Well, my young friend, what is the news in your place?' Certainly an ordinary question and I answered in the usual indifferent, drawling way, 'Nothing new, I believe, Mr. Miner.' 'Nothing new! why that is strange indeed—you forget that we cannot all live in one neighborhood and see with the same eyes—My eyes are getting old, too, they do not see so sharply as they did once, and I shall trouble younger eyes to see a little for me. Let us see! let us see if you have no news!' and question followed question on subjects that had been before me daily, and to me, were not new.

"Before I tore myself away, I found I could carry news even to him who is read up in all which effects the prosperity and well being of the Country—yes, and even impart information. 'You see,' said he, 'you know many interesting things I did not know, if you will only give yourself the trouble to think, and all my neighbors would be as much pleased to hear them as I have been. So go home, my dear boy, and write them down for friend Sisty, or some other county paper; they will all be glad to get them, and next time you come, bring me as much *news* as you have to-day, and you shall be as you and all are—very welcome.'

"I shall never forget the impression that visit made upon me, and I hope I may never lose its influence. I am only sorry I have not taken *all* the advice he gave." W.

But let us return to our chronological story.

Almost immediately on his arrival in Wyoming his thoughts turned to a subject which had deeply interested him for nearly thirty years: the history of the valley, with special reference to the massacre of 1778. The following

extracts from a letter from Chief Justice Marshall refers to an error in his "Life of Washington," bearing upon that massacre:

"RICHMOND, June 9, 1831.

"I am greatly indebted to you for your letter of the 5th of May, and its enclosures. * * * It is certainly desirable that historical narrative should be correct, and I shall avail myself of the information you have been so obliging as to furnish, so far, at least, as to omit the massacres and the charge of Toryism on the inhabitants.

"Mr. Ramsay, I presume, copied his statement from Mr. Gordon, and I relied upon both, as I knew that Mr. Gordon made personal enquiries into most of the events of the war, and that Mr. Ramsay was in Congress, and consequently had access to all the letters on the subject. It is surprising that they should have so readily given themselves up to the newspapers of the day.

"It was certainly our policy during the war to excite the utmost possible irritation against our enemy, and it is not surprising that we should not always have been very mindful of the verity of our publications; but when we come to the insertion of facts in serious history, truth ought never to be disregarded. Mr. Gordon and Mr. Ramsay ought to have sought for it." * * *

This, and one dated February 15th, 1831, are printed in the History of Wyoming, but it may fitly take its place here. The earlier one, Mr. Miner notes, was in reply to one of his, after a lapse of twenty-five years, as if it had just been received, and in a note in the second edition of his "Life of Washington" Mr. Marshall states that, thanks to Mr. Miner's information he had very materially modified the story of the atrocities of the massacre."

In 1833 Mr. Miner zealously began to hunt up all available facts, in print or in manuscript, but still more by sedulous inquiry of "thirty or forty of the ancient people

who were here at the time of the expulsion." In these inquiries, for years, he was greatly aided, in his increasing deafness, by the companionship of his blind and highly intelligent daughter, Sarah, whose memory was extraordinary; as they drove about he asked questions and she stored away the answers in her mind. The first fruits of his investigations appeared in a series of papers called *The Hazleton Travellers,* published in the *Wyoming Republican and Farmers' Herald,* at Kingston, just across the river. The "Travellers" were represented as two men from Hazleton, leisurely going through Wyoming,—one familiar with all its history, the other anxious to learn it. The series appeared sporadically between 1837 and 1839; but as the material grew on his hands a more permanent use of it seemed desirable, and it finally took shape in his chief literary work. "THE HISTORY OF WYOMING, in a series of letters from Charles Miner to his son, William Penn Miner, Esq."; Philadelphia: Published by J. Crissy, No. 4 Minor street, 1845, and in December of this year he was elected an honorary member of the Connecticut Historical Society.

The *History* was an octave volume of 594 pages, including a revised and enlarged edition of *The Hazleton Travellers,* (as far as material was not embodied in the text); a contemporary ballad of the massacre, various collateral matter, maps illustrating the Connecticut claims in Pennsylvania, and a lithographic view of the monument erected on the battlefield, for which Mr. Miner had been working for forty years,—by newspaper articles, personal appeals to the Connecticut legislature, etc., having written to Mrs. Hamilton Bowman, March 24, 1839: "The half-finished monument over those who fell at the massacre in defense of Wyoming, uninclosed, wrings my heart with anguish; the stain partly on us, principally on Connecticut." The shaft was completed, shortly before the publication of the history, by the efficient work, as a collecting committee, of the women of the region, some of them descendants of

those who had fought in the battle. Under its shadow, every third of July for many years, have been held commemorative exercises.

The *History* was published by subscription, Mr. Miner financing it. In his circular he said: "The author thinks proper to say that no pains have been spared to obtain information upon every point connected with his subject. He has flattered himself, as Wyoming has become classic ground, as innumerable errors have heretofore existed in regard to its story, and as its very interesting civil character has been scarcely touched upon, that almost every gentleman would desire for his library, in respect to it, an authentic narrative." The title-page bore the following mottoes: "Diligence and accuracy are the only merits which a historical writer may ascribe to himself." "I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illustrate the subject I had undertaken to treat."

Certainly no American book of local history was ever written with greater care in collecting and sifting original materials; and the work, while not of noteworthy literary form, has the merits of trustworthiness, interestingness, and an uncommonly logical procedure in the general plan and in the setting forth of subordinate details. It instantly supplanted the slight preceding works: Chapman's unfinished monograph and Stone's superficial "Poetry and History of Wyoming"; and it has remained the standard ever since,—being now rather hard to find in the shops of the antiquarian booksellers.

The author's original purpose, as brought clearly into his mind by the exaggerated accounts of the massacre copied by Judge Marshall, in the "Life of Washington," had been to show that, sad as the real story was, it had been magnified as a means of exciting American feeling against the British during the Revolutionary war. Again, says the preface: "Interesting as are the incidents growing out of the Revolutionary war, other matters of scarcely

less moment will claim the reader's attention. For nine years Wyoming, or Westmoreland, was under the jurisdiction of Connecticut; derived its laws from that state, and sent representatives to her assembly. For seven years civil war prevailed or raged between Wyoming and Pennsylvania. The events attendant on those unhappy conflicts demand from the historic pen a faithful record." How faithful the record, many commendations attest; of which but one may be quoted, as putting the whole into a nutshell. Professor Benjamin Silliman of Yale wrote to Mr. Miner [New Haven, April 21, 1846]: "The people of the valley, the people of Connecticut, and the people of our wide country are under great obligations to you for rescuing from oblivion so many interesting facts, and arresting, while it was still possible, the traditionary stories of the surviving few."

In the comparative leisure of his life as farmer and historian, Mr. Miner delivered several occasional addresses,—for instance, at Wilkes-Barre, in 1839, on the centenary of John Wesley's birth. In a Fourth-of-July speech, the same year, on the fiftieth anniversary of constitutional government in the United States, he showed that absence from public life had not dimmed his sense of civic responsibility, or removed his opportunities of service to his fellow-citizens. Said he, in words which are still needed, three-quarters of a century after their delivery: "First, fellow-citizens, with the deepest solemnity let me say that our Federal Constitution was the result of compromise, of concession, of the yielding up not merely of prejudices and predilections, but the surrender on the part of the states of important interests and powers, for the purpose of forming the people of the United States, for all foreign and general purposes, into one nation, yielding the strength and resources of all for the protection, defense and prosperity of all. Concession and compromise, conciliation and forbearance, are inscribed on every pillar and column of the edifice.

'From turret to foundation-stone,' conciliation and compromise are blazoned all over in letters of light. Take this home to your memories and hearts. Next to their Bible and their prayers, teach this lesson to your children."

On Washington's birthday, 1849, he gave an address on "Washington, Taylor, Cass, Van Buren, Fillmore," in which he again urged that the spirit of concession and conciliation, the parent of the Constitution and the preservative of the Union be sedulously cultivated; and, in particular, declared that "the wise of all parties should be consulted, that the distracting tariff question may be compromised to general satisfaction, and established upon a basis reasonable and permanent"—a task upon which the country is still engaged, sixty-four years after. Mr. Webster's commendation of this speech has already been quoted.

Meanwhile an occasional visitor of note came to his rural home; thus J. R. Chandler of Philadelphia (then at the height of his editorial and literary fame), having spent a little time as his guest, in 1844, wrote an article for his *United States Gazette* in which he said that Charles Miner was "the patriarch of the press"; "a part of the boast of the Valley of Wyoming;" and that his cottage seemed "more sacred than the abode of Wordsworth at Windermere." Mr. Chandler described his host's conversation as stimulating rather than didactic, and noted his gentle dignity and quiet humor.

In a letter to his granddaughter, Mrs. William Butler, of West Chester, Penn., Mr. Miner wrote, under date of September 12, 1850:

"Ten days ago I received a very high compliment—*a very distinguished honour*—two carriages drove up, with Dr. Miner in one, and the Hon. Mr. Beaumont in the other, accompanied by no less a person than the Hon. Mr. Bancroft, the eminently distinguished historian, our late minister to England. Immediately upon coming into the valley he enquired for Mr. Miner, and rode up—said he had come

to bring me the British Col. Butler's official letter, giving an account of the Battle, on the invasion of the British and Indians. It was refused by Lord Aberdeen to my friend Everett; but Mr. B. said he told Lord Palmerston he would not take *No* for an answer. To me a most welcome and important document. Wasn't it kind?"* In the Account Book he describes this kindness with many expressions of gratitude, adding: "So—I set down Saturday, the 24th of August [1850] as a bright day in the annals of my declining age. * * * And moreover within the fortnight I had received 5 documents from the Hon. Mr. Webster; and from Gen. Caleb Cushing his address at Newbury-Port July 4. And since Aug. 28 a letter from him in which he introduces to illustrate his subject the name of Mr. Bancroft."

Correspondence, however, was naturally more frequent than personal visits. Letters from many men in public life—senators, judges of the Supreme court, governors, cabinet officers, full of interesting personal or public news and discussion, cheered him in his retirement almost to the end; while requests and thanks for his aid in securing government positions were equal in duration. One of these has special interest to the Wilkes-Barré reader. It is impossible to make a 5 out of the date, but it is evident that it is to his nomination by President Polk as Justice of the United States Supreme Court, in 1845, that Judge Woodward has reference. The judiciary committee failed to confirm the nomination because of Judge Woodward's democratic views.

Dear Mr. Miner: Words are too poor to express the gratitude I feel for the generous support you have given me in this trying crisis. Should I come out of the ordeal alive, life with all its energies must be devoted to the work (alas! I fear it will be a vain endeavour) of justifying the too kind commendations of such men as Chs. Miner—Judge

*See "History of Wyoming," pages VII and 254. Unfortunately the letter cannot be found; it was the one that was "Disallowed at the Foreign Office." He adds, "It corroborated all my conclusions."

Conyngham & G. Mallery. I am humbled to the dust by such astonishing & unmerited demonstrations of confidence from such men. God forgive the errors of their too partial judgments, and reward the beneficence of their intentions. * * * I do not know that you could do more for me, unless you write to Mr. Webster who is on the Judiciary Comtee. I will not tax you with a request to do this. But I know you have the confidence of that great man, and if he could be propitiated, the whig party in the Senate would be likely to follow his lead. * * * I remain, your obliged and humble servant,

"G. W. Woodward."

His old friend, Richard Rush, wrote from Sydenham, near Philadelphia, December 3, 1839: "Mr. Woodward gave me and my family the pleasure of his company out here where we live, during one of the days of his visit to Philadelphia. We talked so much of you that I cannot find it in my heart to let him return home without this line from me; so you will have to receive it, *nolens volens*. One of the ancients, Anaximander, I think it was, but no matter, being asked how he would best like to have his birthday celebrated, replied: 'Let all the boys of Athens have a holiday, when it comes round.' Now I have learned some of *your* secrets; my kind, good, dear old friend. You beat this ancient hollow. The thirty-acre plantation, the incomparable garden, and the annual offering of fruits and flowers from 'Charles and Letitia' beats the old ancient all to pieces. Johnson said that the 'Vision of Mirza' was the most beautiful essay in the world. Wolfe declared to a brother officer, as the boats with his army were descending the St. Lawrence, that he would rather have the fame that awaited Gray's Elegy (that poem being then fresh out) than any he could gain by successfully storming Quebec. Positively, your idea is as pretty as any of Mirza's visions; and for my part I would rather have been the author of it than of any I ever remember just now to have

heard of in the region of chaste and beautiful and benevolent fancy. My wife and daughters and whole fireside can do nothing but talk about it. You see I speak right out, without beating the bush. * * *

"From yours, Always, Always, Always,

"RICHARD RUSH."

An extract from a letter from his nephew, Joseph W. Miner, written from Jalapa, Mexico, May 7, 184(6?), shows what an "open Sesame" the name of Charles Miner was during the Mexican war.

"Your letter to Gen. Cushing I had to leave at his room. * * * I came down with him, and he showed me every attention he could. You know he has been our Brig. Genl. at San Angel. When I was first introduced to him he asked if I was any relation to you. I told him you were my uncle, and he told me you and he had corresponded for a long time, and wished me to remember him kindly to you when I wrote. He always treated me very kindly, and made me Judge Advocate of Courts and Common Sessions, several times. When I went to Gen. Patterson before coming down he also asked me the same question, and when I gave him my answer, he said you were an old friend of his, and sent his best respects to you. Well, when I came here Col. Hughes, the Governor, asked me the same question and said he knew you when in Congress. So, you will perceive of how much benefit you are to me here without actually knowing it. * * * I must tell you of one other incident without being guilty of flattery. I was introduced to an officer of the 9th Regt. 'Are you any relation of Charles Miner who wrote the History of Wyoming?' he said to me. 'I am his nephew,' I answered. 'Well, that's enough!' as much as to imply 'if you are a nephew of the man who wrote *that* you need not aspire to anything higher. That is inheritance enough.'"

The following letter from William H. Seward shows that Mr. Miner was in touch with the newer politicians as

well as the older; and (apparently) that he was still interested in the slavery question:

"WASHINGTON, Jan. 28, 1850.

"I availed myself of a brief recess of the Senate to visit my family at Auburn; and on my return I have the pleasure of receiving your kind note of the 15th, for which I give you my thanks. I like both of the suggestions you make, and I thank you for them. You will perceive that I shall need to exercise caution in bringing them out. They are bold, and wise.

"Accept for this once, a brief reply to a letter whose kindness calls for one of generous confidence. Absence and illness have brought me far in arrear to many correspondents.

"I am with great respect,

"Your humble servant,

"WILLIAM H. SEWARD."

This letter is endorsed "See N. Y. Tribune for Sept., 1850, for resolutions of Mr. S." which prove to be a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, with the appropriation of $200,000 (if necessary) for indemnity, and the proviso that unless the bill received the approval of the inhabitants within six months it should be void. It is interesting to remember that these were the same suggestions Mr. Miner made more than twenty years before; were they the "bold and wise" suggestions of this letter?

The pamphlet mentioned in the following note, October 27, 1850, from the once famous Mrs. Sigourney, a fellow-native of Norwich, was probably the Washington-Taylor speech of the year before:

"A few hours since, some one left at my door a modest looking pamphlet, to whose contents was appended your well-known and honoured name. It is scarcely necessary to write, what would be the experience of every reader (Norwich born), that it was not laid down until finished,

nor indeed without a second perusal. It is a perfect picture gallery, and as vivid as those in Carlyle's 'French Revolution.' You possess the true graphic style,—those short spirited sentences, which so few of the *literati* manage well. Moreover there is no winter in your thought, though you seem to intimate that your near approach to fourscore, is almost a Methuselah date. Now I don't think so at all."

That Mr. Miner was still a careful and constant reader is attested by the following characteristically discreet note [May 24, 1852] from the icy author of "Thanatopsis":

"It would be affectation in me to say that I am not pleased with your favorable opinion of some lines of mine lately published. Your commendation is of the sort I most highly value, since it does not seem prompted by the mere desire to say a civil thing.

"I am sir,

"Very respectfully yours,

"W. C. Bryant."

President Fillmore, on the death of Daniel Webster [October 24, 1852], appointed Mr. Everett his successor as secretary of state; he filled the office four months, to the end of the administration. Intimately personal, and throwing new light upon the noble character of their writer, are the two following letters to Mr. Miner:

"Washington, Nov. 15, 1852.

"My Dear Old Friend: I have yours of the 6th, and I assure you that I truly appreciate your kindness. You will readily believe that I have not come here with any expectation, at the heel of an expiring administration, of doing anything considerable; my only hope is to put the department in creditable order to be handed over to my successor, on the 4th of March. I have no expectation for the future; political advancement requires an amount of labor, not to say drudgery, in the field and on the stump, for which I have no strength or taste. I intend to devote the decline of

my life to the superintendence of the education of the children committed to my charge; to works of private duty (reckoning as the highest duty that of doing good to the utmost of our ability); and to preparation for that great 'election' which does not depend on the popular voice.

"I wish you would look in upon us this winter.

"Yours affectionately,

"EDWARD EVERETT."

"BOSTON, 17 July, 1855.

"(Private)

"My own health, greatly impaired last year, is considerably improved, though far from being robust. I am wholly retired from public life, which I have found to be a game of violence, fraud, and dupery. I do not mean that all politicians use these weapons; but so many do, that they give a character to the Career.

"Your ancient colleague and friend,

"EDWARD EVERETT."

It is interesting to note, in connection with the second letter, that considerations of the highest patriotism led Mr. Everett to accept, five years later, the vice-presidential nomination of the Constitutional Union party, the last attempt to preserve the Union on lines of Whig conservatism.

Meanwhile, the first muttering of the war-storm was sounding through the valley, and was deeply alarming the anti-slavery pioneer of 1826, who was no less the conservative patriot of 1855, the year of this letter from the life-long abolitionist, William Jay:

"BEDFORD, N. Y., Aug. 15, 1855.

"I was greatly gratified by your remembrance of me, as evinced by your letter of the 5th instant, as well as by the evidence it afforded that you continue, amid so many defections, true to the cause of human rights.

"I regard the times as portentous, threatening not the

dissolution of the Union but the destruction of those rights which render it worth preserving. The arrogance and violence of the slave power, and the meanness, servility, and corruption of northern politicians, and most especially of the so-called Democratic party, are tending to make our whole country 'a land of tyrants and a den of slaves.' The Democratic party, *as a party,* in the language of Scripture, neither fears God nor regards man. No sacrifice of northern freedom nor of the rights of humanity is, in the esteem of this party, too base and wicked to be offered in exchange for southern votes and federal office. Among the Whigs there are *individuals* as utterly profligate in these respects as Democrats; but they are exceptions, not the representatives of the moral character of the mass of the Whigs.

"The usurpations of the federal judiciary, as exhibited in the atrocities of Kane and Grier, are alarming symptoms of national degeneracy. What is to be done? You have suggested, in my opinion, the only possible remedy—a union of all opposed to the slave power, without regard to past political affinities. How far this is practicable depends upon the amount of virtue still left in our northern members of Congress. With your permission, I should like to send a copy of a portion of your letter to Mr. Seward and Senators Sumner and Wilson. Its suggestions may be useful to them. * * *

"At the present time there should be no timidity in the expression of anti-slavery sentiments. There never was a period when the words of the poet were more applicable: 'Fear, admitted into public counsels, betrays like treason.'"
* * *

When four years later, John Brown attempted to abolish slavery by the use of a dozen rifles, the old-time abolitionist of over thirty years before wrote to Eli K. Price of Philadelphia in no uncertain words:

"RETREAT, December 18, 1859.

"Here over the mountains, in Luzerne, we have 10,000 voters. I do not believe there is *one*—I never heard of one —so wicked and foolish as to wish the Union to fall. Several years ago, when Chester Butler was our representative and the so often recurring war-cry of dissolution was raised, I was *frightened*—absolutely *scared,* and I wrote to him: 'The cry of Disunion sounds like the rattling terrors of the vengeful snake. And for Heaven's sake put it down at any sacrifice.' The present threat has not alarmed me the least. The act of violence and treason of old Crazy Brown has alarmed and distressed me. I said at once: 'The man is crazy.' The means were so totally and palpably inadequate to the proposed end; they showed as complete an aberration of the reasoning faculty as the simpleton that should attempt to upset the Blue Mountains with a straw * * * nor have I any notion of sympathy with old Brown, Cook, or any of the gang. I said at once: 'Nonsense of his *sincerity.*' I have no idea of a fellow going in to a community, scattering firebrands, arrows, and death, firing a magazine or stirring up a servile war, and crying: 'I am a philanthropist! I go by the Bible!'"

Always a steadfast opponent of slavery, but unable to follow the impracticabilities of Garrison, John Brown, and other advocates of "immediate, unconditional emancipation on the soil," Mr. Miner by lifelong conviction, study, and political experience, favored methods of emancipation which ranked him, as has been seen, with those who were called "conservative opponents of slavery." But his moral detestation of the "institution," and abhorrence of the tactics adopted by its extreme supporters, were as deep as theirs. A manuscript book of miscellaneous notes, entitled *Slavery or Freedom,* and dated May 30, 1854, leaves no uncertain effect in its stinging sentences, such as these:

"'Your first duty,' said the emperor Napoleon, 'is to me! I am the state!' 'Your first duty,' says the imperial

phantom of slavery to its vassals, 'is to me! I am the state!"

"The Missouri Compromise is repealed. I fear it will be a fatal blow to the Union."

"Shall the free states cry 'Craven,' swallow the leek, and receive the brand?"

"Has Gen. Gage arrived at Boston?"

"Is Lord North reinstated in the ministry?"

"Is Bunker Hill blown up?"

"Is Lexington laid desolate, and a lake of oblivion spread over her?"

"Has the Declaration of Independence been burnt by the hands of the common hangman?"

"Are the shackles forged?"

"Are the sons of the Pilgrim Fathers learning their new creed: 'We believe our foolish fathers were mistaken in supposing their mission was to establish religion and freedom; modern light has taught us it was to extend the blessed area of human slavery?' "

Looking back, after just a quarter of a century, on his congressional speech of 1829 concerning slavery in the District of Columbia, Mr. Miner found little gain; for, in these notes, he sarcastically inquires: "As Maryland and Virginia, with the District of Columbia, pertinaciously insist on retaining slavery at the seat of government,—of no use to them and so obnoxious to the free states,—would it not be polite to let Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the other slave states vote what appropriations they may deem proper for the use of the District?" Elsewhere in the notes, he suggests the advisability of moving the Capital farther west.

Again: "Will the legislatures of the free states firmly decline, out of self-respect, to send, or desire the presentation of, wishes or resolves to this Congress?"

"Do not the free states stand much in the attitude the colonies occupied at the beginning of the Revolution, in

respect to petitions to the king and Lord North's administration? Have not the humble requests of both been equally treated with contempt, or disregarded?"

In 1856 he had published a thirty-five page pamphlet entitled "The Olive Branch; or, The Evil and the Remedy." It was composed of a Fourth of July address delivered in West Chester in 1821, with later additions, not very felicitously put together; but its sincerity of conviction appears on every page, while the ability of the older portion, at least, is attested by the fact that Chief Justice Marshall, at the time of its appearance, caused its republication in a Richmond paper. Mr. Miner's "remedy" for the evil of slavery which he held to be recognized by the Constitution, was the appropriation of $100,000,000 by the general government for the gradual emancipation of slaves in the border states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas, "this money to be apportioned among the states named, or either of them, which shall pass laws in the nature of irrevocable contracts with the Federal Government that no person born on or after July 4th, 1876, shall be a slave; and that after that day slavery shall cease to exist within the limits of the same."

As for the other slave states, "slavery confined to those states whose productions of cotton, rice, and sugar are supposed to require their [slaves'] labor, all danger to them from within or without would cease, and the utmost degree of prosperity they are capable of would ensue." The uncharacteristic weakness of this position is seen at a glance; for the rest, he urged that the government place a number of large steamers at the disposal of the Colonization Society, "the healthful highlands of Africa should be explored and purchased; the colored race be aided *home,* encouraged, defended; * * * civilization, knowledge, Christianity, would go in their train; and that fine country, so susceptible of improvement, so long a Paradise Lost, would, under Providence, by our and their instrumentality, become a Paradise Regained."

If all this, viewed sixty years after, seems sufficiently fatuous, let us remember that we too, in the early years of the twentieth century, are coming more and more to see that war is likely to be more foolish than peace; and that it is by no means impossible that certain parts of middle Africa will soon rival the extraordinary wealth of South Africa, nearly all of which has been developed since Charles Miner's day.

One little sign is all that remains to show that Mr. Miner, when the war had actually come, retained his old habit of frank suggestion or judicial commendation, in his correspondence with men in public life; and that suggestion and commendation were equally valued by their recipients. It is a short note from Gideon Welles, then secretary of the navy under Lincoln, to William A. Buckingham, the "war governor" of Connecticut:

"WASHINGTON, 24th April, 1862.

"I am very much gratified with the complimentary remarks of the Hon. Charles Miner, which you were so kind as to communicate in your letter of the 18th instant. The character of Mr. Miner is well known to me, and I have had some slight personal acquaintance with him in former years, dating back to the period when he edited the *Village Record* and was a representative for the double or triple district of Lancaster, Chester, and Delaware, with James Buchanan. His great experience and accurate and discriminating observations make his commendation able indeed, and I appreciate it most fully."

But the hurly-burly of politics was not the only thing that occupied his mind in his old age. As so often before, he turned a prophet's vision to the practical needs of the country. To Congressman Hendrick B. Wright he wrote, March 22, 1854:

"My old eyes only catch glimpses of what is going on in the world, so that I almost belong to the party of 'know-nothings'; but I think sometimes, if I had a seat there,

and possessed your powerful elocution, I would carefully prepare a speech of an hour; arouse the attention of the House from the seeming waste of time to the national, all-important matter: The Rail Road to the Pacific—indispensable in peace or war, for commerce or defence, for settlement and civilization of the vast world of the west."

There are to-day [1915] eight railroads from ocean to ocean.

Looking back on his own life when past the *mezzo cammin* of Dante, Charles Miner estimated its success and failure with the impartiality of an outsider. A stray leaf from a "Common Place Book" dated November 1, 1843, preserves some thoughts suggested by reading Boswell's Life of Johnson, of which one is specially interesting: "I do think Boswell's character of Goldsmith's mind is a just representation of my own: 'His mind resembled a fertile but thin soil. There was a quick but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. The oak of the forest did not grow there, but (rather exaggerated) the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterres appeared in gay succession.'" In 1844 he began his autobiography by these dispassionate words:

"Tuesday, May 7, 1844.—Commenced this sketch of my life. Checkered it certainly has been, as whose is not; vicissitudes common to all I have experienced, and yet in no remarkable degree. Joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity have mingled in my cup, but not in excessive proportions. On the whole, my voyage down the stream of life has been comparatively smooth, and happier than falls to the common lot. At the age of sixty-four I look back not on disappointment, the scene filled with regrets and tinged with melancholy, but many a sunny hour springs to recollection, and the retrospect is, in the main, cheerful and satisfactory."

"Vain would be the attempt to make myself out," says a later passage, "a great man. My true position I well understand—respectable for talents and character, in the

middle rank of life. Had my early schooling been better, especially had I received the training, the mental discipline, of a collegiate and professional education, so as to have given solidity, self-possession, and polish to the talents nature had endowed me with, I might have made my way several steps ahead in public life. * * * To the character of philanthropist and clever fellow, anxious to promote the best interests of his fellow-men, I assert a just claim. Imprisonment for debt, now throughout the United States almost universally repudiated and condemned, was, when I was a young man, and had previously been, not only the law of the land but almost unquestioned as a moral code or Christian regulation. In 1806 I published a column of rhyme [on the subject]. If this and some other efforts to abolish that barbarous custom had some slight effect towards accomplishing the benign object, so far I should not have lived in vain:"

"Where Susquehanna journeying to the main,
Wyoming's fertile fields divide in twain,
Lies a small village, little known to fame,
From Wilkes and Barre that derives its name.
* * * * * *
"A little onward, rising to the view,
A public mansion's seen, of stone, and new;
As you approach the gates of iron tell
Its awful name 'the sons of sorrows cell;'
So the harsh creditor for sordid pelf,
Tears the fond husband from his dearer self.
* * * * * *
"Relentless lure his fellow man confines,
Who robbed of every joy in sorrow pines."

He urges the "Sons of Freedom" who fought for national liberty to

" * * * take the name of tyrants, or no more
Punish a fellow man *for being poor.*"

—*Luzerne Federalist,* May 9th, 1806.

No less ardent but in much better literary style, is a prose plea on the same subject in one of the John Harwood papers, in the *Village Record* for June 16, 1819: "If a man steal your horse how is he punished? By imprisonment. If a man governed by the passions of a demon, sets fire to your house, how do your laws punish him? By imprisonment. And if a man perfectly innocent, by the change of times and fluctuations of trade be reduced to poverty—what is his punishment? IMPRISONMENT! Imprisonment for debt and imprisonment for crime confounds all distinctions and violates, I conceive, the soundest principles of policy and justice."

No part of the encomium passed upon him, after his death, by the veteran journalist, John W. Forney, of Philadelphia, would have pleased Mr. Miner so much as the last: "Charles Miner was a model journalist and statesman, the father of a school of sound thinkers, and the most practical philanthropist of his time."

This philanthropy, like Abraham Lincoln's, was based upon a deep inner conviction rather than glib external protestation. In his religious belief he sympathized with the Presbyterian church, but was never a member of it. No more satisfactory summary of his views could be asked than that given in a letter to his lifelong friend, Eli K. Price, of Philadelphia: "I am deeply interested in the vast and sublime theme of our immortal nature. I cordially agree with you, if there be not a life immortal, and the great doctrines of Christianity be not true, then is life without fruits and creation purposeless."

In his old age at the "Retreat" as he called his Wyoming home (the word not suggesting to his mind its later associations), he lived a long, simple, happy, helpful life with nature, his friends, his books and his memories, but with gradually decaying powers. Long before, in a letter to his wife, he had spoken of himself as "the little grayhaired fellow who takes your arm to feed the chickens," apparently

not fearing the too prophetic warning of a candid friend who wrote to him: "Don't let your mind rust out with the pigs and the chickens." The "cot beneath the Sycamore" was not only a gathering place for a large number of relatives and friends, but, as has been seen, a place of pious pilgrimage.

Sometimes a simple anecdote is a true revealer of character, and a number of these, as they have arisen in the minds of his descendants and others, may form a fitting close for this sketch. His daughter Ellen's memories have been often quoted. She used to say that his sincerity led to very definite views with regard to the personal apparel of his wife and daughters. Several times in his letters from Washington, he expressed disapproval of women flaunting ostrich plumes on their heads; he did not want them to use any kind of perfumery, and disliked very much, to have them wear an old afternoon dress for their morning work. A lady, he said, was much more a lady in a simple print frock for the morning. All of which suggests Ruskin's teaching, later, that to be sincere in character, from the inside out, one must also be sincere in dress.

Often he would go out to see the sun rise and quote:

> "Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

To the end of his life his favorite supper was the mush and milk of his early days by the Wyalusing; but after this simple meal he used to like to sit at the table and talk, says his grand-daughter, Emily R. Miner, who took the chief care of him in his very last days, until he would exclaim: "Em wants to clear up and make it ship-shape and bristol fashion."

Several stories have been told to Mrs. Oliver by the daughter of a woman who used to work in Mr. Miner's family; though not of himself, one that he would like to have recorded, is, that when the maid was terrified at a

thunder-storm, his blind daughter, Sarah, said she was "glad to worship a God who made such a beautiful sound"!

"One day some one came to borrow their brass preserving kettle and for some reason they could not have it, so Grand-father went to town, bought one, and took it to them, only telling them to bring it back when through with it, so he could have it to lend to the next one. Grand-mother was puzzled at the mysteriously rapid disappearance of little cakes she made, till she found he would fill his pockets, and go out to 'make the children happy.'" Mrs. Oliver adds: "The only thing I remember worth telling of Grand-father is this: I was sitting on his lap eating an apple and threw the core into the fire, and he said, 'My child, never throw anything in the fire that any living creature can eat.'"

Through the memory of Miss Simpson, Mrs. Thomas' loving companion and nurse for many years, comes another story of the habitual generosity of the family. After one of the good Christmas dinners such as are recorded in the account book, Mr. Miner said to his wife: "Letitia, I feel as if we ought to go see Granny Worden, and take her something." So they told Jacob to hitch the horse to the sleigh, packed a basket of good things such as they had been having for dinner, and drove to the house at the edge of a wood, to find that the daughter had said: "Mother, we ain't got a maouthful of food in the house." To which "Granny" had replied: "Don't worry, daughter, the Lord will provide." The next morning Mr. Miner sent them potatoes, a barrel of flour and a load of coal.

Here and there are recalled incidents showing his sympathy for his fellow creatures, other than human, to which must be added the memory that one severe winter he devoted a room in the house to the birds, carefully feeding those that sought refuge there.

A vivid personal memory of his grand-daughter, Mrs. W. M. F. Round, is of his sitting by a window, in his big

chair, telling her of the loveliness and beauty of her grandmother. He would ask for her picture from a drawer near by, would look at it, kiss it tenderly, and then have her put it carefully back; while his grandson, Isaac M. Thomas, remembers his grace of manner, not only to his friends, but that on meeting an old Irish woman on the street he would doff his hat with a courtly sweep and the Irish greeting: "Goidé mar tá tú"—"God be with you."

It has been said of him that he had a poetical quotation ready to fit every occasion, and from his daughter Mary's daughter, Mrs. James McKeen, comes a group of memories illustrating this habit: "My recollection of our Grandfather is of a dignified yet gracious personality. He always greeted us children with some playful remark, often some quotation from his loved poets *apropos* to our occupation or personal condition.

"I was playing chess with a young man whose visits did not wholly please my grandfather, and the evening having advanced to the seemly hour of nine, he entered the room, and with a courteous gesture of salutation began:

'Too late I stayed—forgive the crime!
Unheeded flew the hours:
How noiseless falls the foot of Time
That only treads on flowers.'

"It is needless to add the young man quickly retired. Grandfather liked to take a nap in the evening by the big blazing grate fire. One evening he suddenly wakened, and probably had dreamed some vivid dream, for he plumped his chair sharply on the floor and looking round began:

'For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?'

Mrs. McKeen also says: "He told me of Mrs. Sigourney and how he had jumped the broomstick with her when they

were boy and girl together [in Norwich]. His children and grandchildren dearly loved him, and with a love and pride which, as I now look back upon it, after sixty years, seems to me exceedingly rare among the children of men."

Another picture of his personality in his last years as given in a letter by his granddaughter, Mrs. William H. Sturdevant [July 21, 1913] to another granddaughter, Mrs. Charles F. Richardson, is so vivid that it must be quoted entire, even if repeating a little:

"I well remember the stately and dignified presence of Grandfather Miner, and how we children felt that he was one to be treated with great respect and consideration. I don't know what his height was, but to me he looked quite tall and handsome, with a beautiful white curl lying on his shoulder. Mother grew to look like him, and [Charles F. Richardson] is much the same style of man, more so than any of his grandsons.

"He was very much interested in our education—that we should form right literary habits. He encouraged us to learn poetry by heart, and rewarded us with the gift of a new dress for learning Gray's Elegy. I was to learn it all because I was oldest, the rest of you a few verses according to your years; you being a little thing, had probably only two or three.

"He used to write formal letters of invitation for me to dine with him. He was given to making complimentary speeches to the ladies; I remember some one saying: 'Girls, here comes Mr. Miner; now we'll all hear how pretty we are.'

"He was a very early riser; by four or five o'clock on a winter morning he might be found reading or writing by a glowing coal fire in a big grate, Aunt Sarah beside him. He read aloud to her whatever he wrote or whatever he was reading for himself; and you remember it was said that as he drove about the valley visiting the survivors of the massacre to get his information for the history, she went

with him to hear for him and retail to him what he wanted of their long stories. You know he called the home where he spent his last years 'Retreat'; I suppose because he had retired from the world and its business and imagined himself to be a farmer. He had chairs carried out to the field; took Aunt Sarah with him; and they sat together husking corn, and talking, I suppose of the history and literature of past ages.

"He was often spoken of as a man a hundred years ahead of his time, [and less politely as 'crazy Charles Miner'] for he was full of ideas as to the future of the valley, and sometimes prophesied respecting the developments that might be expected. You remember how beautiful the junction of Mill Creek and Laurel Run used to be—almost like a lake? He did not doubt but that some day there might be boats upon the water; and shortly after his death a boat appeared there—a canal boat; indeed it lay there as his funeral crossed the bridge. * * *

"[Now] I must tell you about his geese. I don't believe you remember them, for he had geese and taught them to dance for their food while he whistled the hornpipe; I don't know how he managed to teach them, but I know he was above the use of hot plates. [Mrs. Richardson remembers being told that once he was surprised and grieved to find his pet goose dancing idiotically until it dropped dead, having eaten pumpkin seeds that had been spread to dry, and had fermented.]

"One morning when mother was very young, she and Aunt Sarah were up unusually early. Mother went wild over a rain of stars. Of course Aunt Sarah could not see that it was anything extraordinary, and thought it was only that mother was not accustomed to the early morning sky, so she did not tell Grandfather the sky was falling, and his distress was great, when the reports began to reach him from the astronomical world, to think how narrowly he had missed the wonderful sight.

"He enjoyed having his friends about him, and entertained liberally and graciously. Sally Slabach came to make mince pies and apple-butter, and to roast turkeys, and all that belonged to that rite, preparing for a family Thanksgiving dinner; he watched actively to be sure all were well served and appreciated the good things, but he ate sparingly, perhaps pouring a glass of wine for a friend and setting his own glass in the corner cupboard, where it remained undisturbed, which was as near as he came to obeying Dr. Miner's injunction: 'Now, Uncle Charles, you must drink wine to keep up your strength,' and you know mother said he braved the indignation of his friends, while they were living in West Chester, by being one of the first to take liquor off of his sideboard. In the days that I remember he was the only important member of the family, called upon by all important strangers and home people, of course. I never in later years saw Judge Conyngham's daughter, Mrs. Parrish, when praise of him was not the principal topic of her conversation—his dignity, graciousness of manner, and handsome face and figure were never forgotten.

"Do you remember the pretty note Judge Conyngham wrote asking permission to name his little son for Grandfather?

" 'There *is* something in a name,' he wrote, 'and as yet my little infant has none—I want him to have one which may be to him an example of good, one of which he may hereafter be proud and which at the same time may gratify the friendship of his parents—May we call him 'Charles Miner'? I trust he will never disgrace it.

'truly yr friend
'JOHN N. CONYNGHAM

"Monday 27th July.'

"I often wished that mother and Aunt Sarah had had a habit of talking more about their father, Charles, and mother, Letitia. Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Beaumont told me

the most I ever heard about grandmother, her sweet voice, beauty, and literary taste.

"I suppose I ought to remember more clearly than I do about Grandfather; we lived in his house from the time Nellie was three months old till about your birthday. "He called grandmother 'Lete' and her name is mine."

[To the above letter of Judge Conyngham, Mr. Miner thus replied:]

Hon. John N. Conyngham,

My Dear Friend,

Your kind note of the 27th slept in my Brother's pocket till 3 this afternoon.

I cannot express to you the pride and pleasure the proposition to name your son after me, awakened in my breast. To obtain the favorable opinion of the wise and good has been with me one of the strongest incentives to action through life, and a manifestation of it, more flattering and agreeable could not have taken place.

But, with my prayers for, and my Blessings on, the boy, let me beg of you, while you call him Charles, that, for the middle name you substitute another than mine. The early loss of a lovely child named fully after me, by my excellent friends John and Sybilla Townsend, leads me tremblingly to fear, where I should dearly love, and causes the judgment to disapprove the earnest wish.

With the truest esteem

Your obliged friend

July 29th, 1840. (signed) CHARLES MINER.

Leaving a request that his body be buried in the old graveyard, where "the mould was soft and pleasant," and he would be "surrounded by old friends," Charles Miner died at his home October 26, 1865. Here he was laid, but on the abandonment of the burying ground he was moved to the cemetery by the river, where he lies at the top of the hill, his grave being marked, according to his expressed wish, by

a monument of native stone. His health had long been feeble; indeed, as far back as 1845, he had professed his inability to walk without great pain in a masonic funeral; and the expression used by him in his letter seems to indicate that the weakness was not temporary. In 1855 he declared himself "too deaf to hear his friends without exertion by them in loud speaking." But to the last he was the punctilious gentleman described by his granddaughter, of singular benignity and courtesy of manners; a kindly, suggestive, but not strenuous or egotistic talker; and one who radiated an atmosphere of winning friendship. Hon. Eli K. Price wrote to Mr. Miner's daughter, Ellen, November 10, 1878: "They cannot know, who never saw him, the perfection of his genial nature, his bland courtesy, his kindly politeness and amenity, that sprang from his loving heart. From what they may read they can judge he had a cultivated intellect, a most refined taste, and the fine imagination of the poet, but all the results of superior natural gifts."

In a commemorative address Mr. Price wrote: "I am reminded by a quotation made in one of his letters written many years ago, that he acted through life with a view unto the end: 'Oh, that the winding up may be well.' Seldom do we look upon one so good and perfect in character as was he of whom we now write. We rejoice that he completed so perfect an example for his fellowmen."

Of the other tributes one only may be added:

"He was easy and winning in manners; scrupulously neat and precise in his dress, (and always a flower in his buttonhole, if he could find nothing but a hollyhock), courteous in demeanor to all who approached him; open and generous with his purse, even to his own detriment; and a lover of all those noble qualities which help to make up the true and honest man. In conversation he was peculiarly agreeable—no tongue more eloquent than his, so smooth in compliment, so polished its language; and it is doubtful if

anyone ever left his presence without a feeling of self satisfaction and of pleasure for the interview. He never lost a friend—at least not by fault of his own. All who knew him intimately loved him dearly." E. Bowman Miner in *Record of the Times,* Nov. 8, 1865.

One Sunday, as late as 1885, attracted by his charming personality, and fine sermon, Mrs. Oliver, then living in New Jersey, invited a visiting clergyman, Mr. Edwin Reinhart, home to dinner. On returning to the room after a moment's absence she found him standing before her grandfather's picture with the tears streaming down his cheeks. "Mrs. Oliver," he said, "did you mean to spring it on me?" Bewildered, she said: "Spring what"? "Did you *mean* to spring it on me? Why Charles Miner was almost my best friend; his brother, Asher, *was* my best friend." Then he told her of having worked in their office, and of its having been Asher's influence that turned him to the ministry.

Very recently the daughter of an old friend has spoken of her vivid memory of the beautiful picture Charles Miner made when walking immediately behind the hearse of a venerable associate, his hat in his hand and his white hair floating in the breeze. Once seen, he was seldom forgotten. Even in his dress he suggested, by his ruffled shirt front and white cravat, the "gentleman of the old school"; and all who knew him, in old age, bear uniform testimony to the almost unique impression left by the snowy head, aquiline nose, eye undimmed by age, and kindly ways of him who, having begun life as a pioneer, ended it as a sage.

THE END.

Referring back to page 105, where Mr. William Rawle, in his letter of January 14, 1829, expresses the hope that Mr. Miner's efforts to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia would not be lost sight of", the Editor adds:

This hope of Mr. Rawle's has hardly been fulfilled; many writers of the history of his time in congress ignoring Mr. Miner entirely; this is true even of some who have devoted themselves to the study of the anti-slavery movement. Indeed it is rather hard to avoid the feeling that fate has worked against his due recognition. Misprints, wrong dates, omissions in indices and in congressional reports, etc., pursue him. In a large public library the small matter of the date of his birth was wrong until a short time ago; the date on one of the volumes of the Journal of the House accessible to the present writer was insufficient, and a wrong date in the text of that volume combined with omissions in the official reports to cause a long, laborious search through unofficial papers for facts that should have been easily at the trained student's disposal. Of a dozen cyclopedias examined only one gives a satisfactory sketch, and there is a slip in it. Even the accurate Bartlett, in his "Familiar Quotations," at first accredited "An Axe to Grind,' to Benjamin Franklin. In the index of an unalphabetized biographical dictionary his name appears, but the pagination is wrong, and the item unfindable. Inaccuracy and omissions in the index of John Quincy Adams' Diary required a hunt to find several pleasant allusions, some of which are quoted.

Also, in his account of the "five ark-loads" of anthracite coal starting from Mauch Chunk, McMaster makes no mention of the senders, but tells the story of the man who slammed the stove door only to come back to a red-hot fire a little differently from the form family tradition has kept it for this memoir—perhaps his is the more accurate version of this trivial point.

The feeling of the House, too, that made it so difficult

for one of Mr. Miner's genial nature to persist, year by year in his self imposed task, has not been understood. A. B. Hart, editor of and writer for the *American Nation,* says: "Till 1830 there seems to have been no notion that slavery was a question which must not be discussed in congress." (Vol. 16, P. 164), while Von Holst says: "It was not until the next session, when Heister of Pennsylvania (Feb. 4, 1833), handed in a petition of the same tenor [as that of Mr. Miner in 1828], that the *first* traces of disquietude on the part of the south over this agitation showed themselves." Mason, of Virginia, said that "thus a course had been entered upon the end of which would be the abolition of slavery in the United States" (Vol. 2, P. 236), which was exactly what Charles Miner hoped for when he offered his first resolution on May 13th, 1826.

Again, as to leadership in the movement, James Freeman Clarke, Anti-Slavery Days, P. 40, says: "Passing over these preliminary skirmishes [of Josiah Quincy and Tristram Burgess of Rhode Island 1825-35] we come down to 1835, when the real battle commenced on the floor of congress. * * * Then came to the front a man—John Quincy Adams." While John T. Morse, in his Life of John Quincy Adams in the American Statesman series, P. 190, says: "It is possible now to see plainly that Mr. Adams was really the leader in the long crusade against slavery."

Forgetting all the work by the opposers of slavery from its beginning it is common to read, in many histories, in varied words, the statement even the careful Rhodes puts into this form: "While this controversy was going on, William Lloyd Garrison began the abolition movement by the establishment of the *Liberator* at Boston, January 1st, 1831."

If limited by some such qualifying phrase as "extreme radical" movement, or by Von Holst's careful distinction that the early anti-slavery societies were humanitarian,

while the abolition movement was political, this is true, or would be if it were not for the quaker, Lundy.

Returning to the question of the recognition of Mr. Miner's work on the floor of the house, we find that with one exception the historians ignore the resolutions of the first two years, while several mention the petition of 1828, and the resolutions of 1829.

Henry Wilson's *"Slave Power in America,"* has already been quoted in the text. A. B. Hart, in *The American Nation,* says (Vol. 16, P. 165): "The abolitionists opened up a good point of attack against slavery in the District of Columbia. About 1828, Miner of Pennsylvania made himself the leader of the movement, introducing petitions and bills for the gradual emancipation in the District."

W. O. Blake in his *"History of Slavery and the Slave Trade,"* summarizes the 1828 petition signed by 1000 residents of the District (House Document 215), adding "A stronger anti-slavery document has not in later years been presented to congress; nor did it receive any more efficient action than similar petitions have since received."

Von Holst quotes this petition in a note, and says "Here (District of Columbia) slavery could be abolished by law at any moment [some still honestly thought it could not]. Therefore not only the abolitionists but also more moderate opponents of slavery were convinced it should be done without delay. The matter was frequently agitated in congress. On the 6th of January, 1829, Miner of Pennsylvania moved the appointment of a committee which was, among other things, to 'inquire into the expediency of providing by law for the gradual abolition of slavery in the District.' The House rejected the cutting arguments advanced in favor of the motion." *(History of the United States, Vol. 2, P. 235.)*

But it remained for McMaster to trace each step, and do Mr. Miner full justice. He says: "Petitions were presented from time to time praying for the abolition of slavery in the District, but it was not till Charles Miner of

Pennsylvania became a member, that the existence of slavery and the slave trade was attacked in serious earnest by the introduction of resolutions which the House refused to consider. The attention which Mr. Miner could not secure in May [May 13, 1826, when it will be remembered he was refused a hearing amid great excitement] was readily secured in December, 1826, at the beginning of the second session of the 19th congress."

Again, first session of the 20th congress, 1828: "One of the petitions [which Mr. Miner prepared, as has been seen,] bore the signatures of 1000 inhabitants of the District, but neither the number of signatures, nor the number of petitions, nor the sources from whence they came availed anything. The House went through the decent form of referring them to the committee for the District. The committee reported a bill that was not considered, and the petitioners, nothing discouraged, besieged the 20th congress during its second session, with the same energy with which they beset the first. The cause, moreover, again found a champion in Mr. Miner, who forced the House to action by resolutions of his own. An effort was made to strike out the preamble, member after member declared he was willing to vote for the enquiry, but had never heard of many of the allegations. Mr. Miner therefore proceeded to prove them."

McMaster then gives a full summary of this 1829 preamble and series of resolutions and speech, so similar to the one in this sketch as to suggest to the reader that one was taken from the other, instead of both being from the original. McMaster adds: "The House instructed the committee to make the proposed enquiry, which proved as fruitless as any that had gone before. The committee replied 'that this constant agitation must sooner or later be productive of serious mischief, if not danger to the peace and harmony of the Union and was greatly to be regretted. False hopes of liberty were held out to the slaves, exciting

them to insubordination, and creating a restlessness for emancipation incompatible with the existing state of the country. It upheld housing slaves of dealers in public prisons. * * * Abolition of the slave trade was most impolitic. It was best to let the matter rest.'" But "a few evils resulting from the quartering of large numbers of slaves in the city for a long time did need correction, and this was provided for in a bill which died in committee of the whole."

It hardly seems as if the work could be called "fruitless" that caused one reluctant committee to bring in a bill repealing the objectionable laws of the District, and another to offer such a frightened retort. Rather, to revert to Mr. Rawle's mixed figures, it seems as if Mr. Miner had cause to feel satisfied with the effect of his "entering wedge," his "foundation." Even though "nothing effectual" was done that session and slavery was not abolished in the District of Columbia until 1862 (when 3000 slaves were freed at the price of $300 a piece) who shall say how much they helped to produce the "serious mischief" of later years?

"Since this was in print it has been found that Mr. Meigs renewed his resolutions in a somewhat modified form (chiefly by proposing gradual emancipation by purchase) on February 15, 1821. Tabled by vote of 66 to 55."

CHARLES MINER'S FAMILY.

Charles Miner, born at Norwich, Conn., Feb. 1, 1780; died at Plains Township, Pa., Oct. 26, 1865.

Letitia Wright, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., June 8, 1788; married Charles Miner, Jan. 16, 1804; died at Plains Township, Pa., Feb. 27, 1852.

CHILDREN:

Ann Charlton, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., Oct. 24, 1804; married Dr. Isaac Thomas, of West Chester, Pa.; died at West Chester, Pa., Mar. 23, 1832.

Sarah Kirkbride, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., June 4, 1806; died at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., Jan. 14, 1874.

Mary Sinton, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., July 16, 1808; married Joseph Jackson Lewis, of West Chester, Pa., died at West Chester, Pa., Oct. 27, 1860.

Charlotte, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., June 30, 1810; married Stephen Fuller Abbott, of Plains Township, Pa.; died at Plains Township, Pa., July 28, 1859.

Letitia Wright, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., 1812; died at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., Aug. 14, 1813.

Ellen Elizabeth, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., Aug. 14, 1814; married Jesse Thomas, of West Chester, Pa.; died at Laurel Run, Pa., Mar. 25, 1913, in her 99th year.

William Penn, born at Wilkes-Barré, Pa., Sept. 8, 1816; married Elizabeth Dewart Liggett, of West Chester, Pa.; died at Miner's Mills (formerly Plains Township), Pa., April 3, 1892.

Francis Cope, born at West Chester, Pa., May 12, 1818; died at West Chester, Pa., Sept. 6, 1820.

Emily Hollenback, born at West Chester, Pa., Aug. 12, 1821; died at West Chester, Pa., Aug. 27, 1822.

Charles Townsend, born at West Chester, Pa., Dec. 19, 1823; died at West Chester, Pa., Feb. 23, 1824.

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE OF CHARLES MINER AND LETITIA WRIGHT.

This is to certify that on the sixteenth day of January A. D. one thousand eight hundred and four Before me William Rofs one of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Luzerne—Charles Miner and Letitia Wright of Wilkesbarre Having the consent of friends and no objection appearing were Legally joined in marriage—In Witnefs whereof the said Charles and Letitia (she assuming the name of her said Husband) as I the said William Ross, and other the Witnefses Present, have hereunto subscribed our names the day and year aforesaid

CHARLES MINER
LETITIA MINER

Wm. Rofs
Josephine Wright
Sarah Wright
Jesse Fell
Thomas Wright
Hannah Fell
Nancy Miner
Asher Miner
Mary Miner
Willm Wright
Sarah Ann Wright
Josiah Wright (Seal)
Nathan Palmer
Rufha Palmer
William Caldwell
Jane Caldwell
Sidney Tracy
Edwin Tracy
Steuben Butler
John Twiesdale
Sally Wright

Ezekiel Hyde
Thomas Welles
John Robinson
Isaac Bowman
Jona. Balkeley
Laura Anibal
Charlotte Schott
Hanna Wright
Mary Gordon
Jane Ely—
Harriott Welles
Nancy Butler
Eliza Nafs
Ben. Perry
Mary Perry
Mary Nelson
Sarah Ingham
Sally Ann Wright
Annamaria Miner

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